FEMA administrator visits Governor's Office. PAGE 2
Tinian firefighter allegedly caught with drugs. PAGE 2

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

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CHRYSTAL MARINO
Saipan Chinese Association members prepare to begin the lion dance at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan last Saturday.

CNMI joins celebrations to welcome the Year of the Dragon

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

It was a colorful display of culture as members of the Saipan Chinese Association welcomed the Year of the Dragon with several performances of the

See DRAGON on Page 4

Missing man found dead

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
The body of missing person Jesus Pinaula Reyes was found near the entrance of a compound across Happy Market As Lito.

The body of missing Jesus Pinaula Reyes was found in a state of decomposition over the weekend across Happy Market in As Lito.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The five-day search for Jesus Pinaula Reyes came to an end this weekend after his decomposing body was found beneath scrub brush across the Happy Market grocery store in As Lito.

The Department of Public Safety

See DEAD on Page 4

Yumul: Revenue collected in 1st quarter short by $5.3M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» **Lawmaker fears if trend continues, $20M shortfall possible this fiscal year**

The total amount of taxes and fees collected by the CNMI government in the first quarter of this fiscal year was short by $5.3 million, said Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) on Friday.

He fears that, if this collection trend continues, the CNMI government is looking at a possible $20-million shortfall this fiscal year.

See REVENUE on Page 4

Kilili recounts past human trafficking cases in NMI

» **US House unanimously passes bill on enhancing detection of human trafficking**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) told the U.S. House

See KILILI on Page 4

In this screen grab from a YouTube video, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) delivers his remarks in support of a bill, H.R. 443, or the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act, which he has been working on for many years with Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Michigan). The House voted unanimously to pass the bill.

INSIDE

NATION
As chances rise of a Joe Biden-Donald Trump rematch in the U.S. presidential election race, America's allies are bracing for a bumpy ride.
PAGE 12

WORLD
Melodic Colombian Spanish fills a hospital treating soldiers wounded fighting Russian forces in eastern Ukraine.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
Denis Villeneuve doesn't feel like he came back to Arrakis for "Dune: Part Two." In his mind, he never left. The sequel, which opens in theaters on March 1, is the culmination of a six-year filmmaking journey.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

FEMA administrator visits Governor's Office

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang recently met with the administrator for the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Deanne Criswell, and her team—Region 9 administrator Robert Fenton, Jr., Region 9 Integration Team lead Brian Beck, and other government officials—to discuss the status of infrastructure projects and emergency preparedness in the CNMI.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Deanne Criswell, right, speaks with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang during a visit last week that included FEMA Region IX administrator Robert Fenton and FEMA Public Assistance director Robert Pesapane to discuss updates on active FEMA projects in the Commonwealth. Criswell, Fenton, Pesapane, along with other FEMA officials, also visited the Northern Marianas College, the CNMI Public School System, the Emergency Operations Center, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and the ongoing permanent housing construction sites during their stay here.

Criswell commended the CNMI for its projects that aim to strengthen infrastructure resilience, such as the replacement of old power poles and the improvement of Beach Road. She also updated the governor and lieutenant governor about the types of assistance available through FEMA: displacement assistance and serious need assistance—to help members of the community that lose their homes, those most impacted by natural disasters.

Palacios and Apatang expressed appreciation for FEMA's consistent presence in the CNMI. ***(PR)***

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Tinian firefighter is allegedly caught with 'ice'; bail at $25K

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $25,000 cash bail on a Tinian firefighter who was allegedly caught in possession of methamphetamine.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed last week a $25,000 cash bail on Christopher San Nicolas King, who was allegedly found in possession of methamphetamine pursuant to an anonymous tip.

King, 48, faces one count of possession of a controlled substance.

During his bail hearing last week, King's lawyer, assistant public defender Emily Thomsen, asked to have her client's bail modified and have him released to his sister on Tinian as a third-party custodian.

Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds strongly opposed the motion for bail modification, arguing that a person convicted of drug charges is one of the members of the sister's household.

Camacho found the proposed third-party custodian unsuitable and denied the request for bail modification.

Following the bail hearing, Camacho remanded the defendant back to Department of Corrections custody.

King was ordered to return to court for a preliminary hearing on Feb. 14 while his arraignment was set for March 4.

According to the complaint against King, an anonymous caller informed Tinian Department of Public Safety on Jan. 28 about a package containing meth that was arriving via Star Marianas. Police were told that the package was for King and was sent by his brother.

On the same day, Tinian DPS, in coordination with the Division of Customs and Biosecurity, confirmed that a package had arrived at the Tinian airport for King.

Police later determined that

See TINIAN on Page 4

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PROCUREMENT SERVICES • CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB24-BECQ/RT-42400040
SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 29, 2024 TIME: 09:00 A.M.
"OFFICE SPACE LEASE FOR BECQ ON ROTA"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY BY FEBRUARY 20, 2024, TO MRS. ZABRINA S. CRUZ VIA EMAIL AT zabrina.shai@becq.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RICHARD V. SALAS
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

LET'S CELEBRATE
Valentine's Day
at the Mariana Lighthouse | February 14, 2024 | 5 pm

SET 1
Rib Eye Steak & Lobster Tail & a glass of wine
$59.50

SET 2
Salmon Steak & Shrimps & a glass of wine
$30.00

SET 3
New York Steak & Lobster & glass of wine
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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

#lovenotes

Ericka, Happy Valentine's my love! I am forever thankful for everything we shared together and i look forward to the future with you. I love you forever and always. Buboy

To my three Valentine's date:
Dada, Kuku and Baba. I love you! — Mama

To Mia from Davy
Happy Valentines
Sexy !!! I love you -
150406

To My One And Only Mahal Isagani C. Salazar,
I thank God he gave me you, and I thank you for loving me. Mahal kita MahalKo!
Love always, your wife Debbie S.

To: Maria Taz Conti
I love you Mahal, salamat sa lahat.
From: Noel

Is your name Google?
Because you have everything I've been searching for. Happy Valentine's Day B1. - B2

Dear Robert Dee II Tudela, You are so blessed to have me in your life. I know you love me with all your heart! I'm so happy to be in your life because I am the best thing that ever happened to you! Happy Valentines Babe! I love you! Xoxo - ginen i asagua-mu

Happy Valentine's Day
Angela Barbo,
I love you from Marpi to San Antonio and back! Casey Huliganga

Davy Joshua, Thank you for always cooking for me and making sure I never go hungry. Thank you for making me thick. Now, you'll always have something to grab. So propose to me nah. — Your girl.

To: Gojira,
Happy Valentine's my love, I love you forever and ever. God blessed me so much for being able to spend every hour and every second with you. Thank you for being my other half. I love you.
From: King Kong

My King Kong, I like shiny things but I'd marry you with paper rings!
That's right! Love, Gojira

To: Teresa, Bhebsy, I love you!
Thank you for everything and for taking care of us. You deserve everything in this world.
From: Rex

To: Mikey,
Thank you for everything,
I love you!
From: Arriane

To: Kristan Rose Torres
Thank you for the love and affection.
You are everything and more.
From: Christian Bravo

To my Buboy, Thank you for never failing to make me feel beautiful inside & out. You are my happily ever after, soul mate, and bestfriend. I don't know what I did to deserve you, but I'm grateful for it every day.
I love you. Forever yours, E

Langga, Thank you for always taking care of us and putting us first. Love you and appreciate you always. From: Your Langga

Rikki, Happy Valentine's Day Rikki! We love you!!
Hannah & Pickles

Honey,
To the kindest, gentlest, and selfless man I know, only God knows how thankful and lucky I am to have you. I love you my Honeybee
From: Your Love

CNMI strengthened through disaster response training

NMC

Basic Disaster First-Aiders demonstrated resourcefulness by utilizing available materials to transport individuals requiring assistance. In this image, they employ wood and a tarp for this purpose.

Strengthening community resilience, the recently concluded Disaster Response Advanced First Aid Basic Disaster First Aid training initiative has left a profound and lasting impact across the Commonwealth, bolstering community resilience in the face of anticipated increasing intensity and frequency of natural disasters.

This collaborative effort between CNMI Homeland Security Emergency Management, CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, and the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services-Family, Community, and Youth Development program has significantly elevated disaster preparedness throughout the region.

NMC

Participants from the Department of Public Works, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and Department of Labor gather for a group photo after successfully completing their DRAFA BDFA training session.

DRAFA is a comprehensive community-based disaster preparedness and response training program, emphasizing preparation, prevention, assessment, and self-treatment of illnesses and injuries. Participants engaged in an immersive learning experience, encompassing lectures, discussions, and hands-on activities, fostering leadership, teamwork, and proficiency in addressing injury scenarios and trauma.

"We appreciate the collaborative partnerships with HSEM and DFEMS as certified instructors who bring DRAFA training to our islands," NMC-CREES interim dean Patricia Coleman said. "NMC-CREES FCYD is addressing disaster preparedness through building local capacity which is a critical issue for our islands."

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

NMC

CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services Firefighter Robert Cruz explains the recovery position to participants at Kagman High School.

DRAGON

From page 1

lion dance when the association visited several establishments last Saturday, Feb. 10, to mark the Lunar New Year.

The lion dances, which are believed to attract the blessings of the lunar new year, brought the dancers to the Hyatt Regency Saipan, TSL Plaza, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, POI Aviation, Century Tours, the JP Center, CTSI Logistics, the ARC building, Duty Free Saipan, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan, among others.

With hotels and businesses hanging a vegetable offering in front of their establishments, the lions would then "devour" the greens and spit out of their mouth a blessing scroll.

As always, the colorful dancing, crashing cymbals, and beating drums drew crowds to watch and take part in the celebration. And as always, many pictures were taken and smiles produced and as in the case at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, many of the youngest spectators were successful in snatching some of the vegetable offerings. The young boys mostly went for the carrots, until one of the older boys said, "I don't know why you guys keep trying to get the carrots! You can just buy one from LJ [Store]."

The exposure and celebration of culture was one of the reasons many spectators, both tourist and community members alike, gathered to watch.

Rob Epley, who is a fifth grade teacher at Garapan Elementary School, said he and three other teachers brought altogether 18 of their students to watch the celebration at Hyatt.

"Yes, we wanted them to get the cultural experience, learning respect and appreciation for other cultures, and hearing the fireworks. This is our Saturday school program, 'Health and Wellness.' And we look for activities in the community where we can to expose the students to different cultures, learning respect, doing activities outdoors. Our program is every Saturday… and we have 18 students with us here today. "

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager Clayton Darlington shows the blessing scroll given to him by the Saipan Chinese Association during the lion dance last Saturday.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Saipan Hyatt Regency general manager Simon Graf, center, shows the blessing scroll given to him last Saturday onsite at the resort in Garapan.

REVENUE

From page 1

Yumul shared this sobering news during the House of Representatives' session last Friday, saying the Department of Finance had informed the Legislature about the shortfall.

Yumul, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, said they're urging the Senate to consider passing some of the revenue generating bills that the House had sent it, in order to curb the shortfall.

The Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chaired by Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) has been conducting public hearings on five bills that are intended to increase revenue funds.

Yumul said he is assuming that the Golden Week—the longest holiday period in both China and Japan—is coming up in the next couple of months so the government should get an increase in tourism and hopefully start collecting more revenues for the CNMI.

"But, as of today, or what was submitted, it's a $5.3-million shortfall for the first quarter," he said.

DEAD

From page 1

reported over the weekend that the body of Reyes, who had been missing for over a week, was found on Feb. 10 at 10am in a state of decomposition near a compound in As Lito.

"Preliminary investigations reveal that a witness who resides in the compound was mowing grass when he smelled the odor of what he initially thought was that of a decomposing dead animal. Witnesses decided to check on the two goats that belong to the family when he discovered a dead person in a state of decomposition. DPS was then notified of the discovery. Further investigations confirmed the identity of the deceased as Jesus P. Rios, who was reported missing last Feb. 5. DPS sends its thoughts and prayers to the family of Jesus P. Rios," DPS' report states.

At the scene, *Saipan Tribune* spoke with some witnesses who said that police found Reyes' body in the bushes just before the entrance to the compound.

"Earlier today, police were searching through the jungle. There was a body found there. We didn't hear much about it, but police have been searching all day," said a witness.

The witnesses who live in the area said they were not aware of anything suspicious leading up to the discovery of the dead body.

In a statement from assistant Chief of Police Simon Manacop, he said DPS' Criminal Investigative Bureau continues to investigate the case but, as of press time, has not determined if there was any foul play.

"This case remains under investigation. Due to the decomposition of the body, DPS can't determine if it was homicide. But there's no evidence so far that suggests foul play," he said.

Rios was a 67-year-old male who was residing in Finasisu when he went missing last Feb. 5.

According to reports, Rios was last seen at about 12pm on Feb. 5 by a family member who witnessed him go outside the home to smoke.

KILILI

From page 1

of Representatives during a session last Monday that the horrible crime of human trafficking occurs in every part of the country, including in the CNMI.

In the past, Sablan said, several construction companies have lured non-U.S. workers to the CNMI with false promises and misrepresentations about pay and conditions.

"They didn't come to the southern border, I will assure you that. They came by airplane," he said.

The delegate made his remarks in support of H.R. 443, or the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act, which he has been working on for many years with Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Michigan).

The House voted unanimously to pass H.R. 443, which directs the U.S. Department of Labor to train staff on how to detect human trafficking and provide them with the necessary screening tools. The bill is now before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, for consideration.

H.R. 443 directs Labor to determine which employees should receive the training and education based on their official duties.

Sablan recounted that, in the past, some construction companies in the CNMI would lure foreign workers to the CNMI, then withhold the employees' wages and seize their passports. He said the workers were subjected to inhumane working conditions and made to live in crowded and unsanitary barracks with barely enough food and water.

"They were forced to work in unsafe conditions, forced to look out to the community for food and food assistance, [with] some suffering serious injuries without access to adequate medical care," the delegate said.

Sablan also mentioned that there was even one workplace fatality. He did not elaborate.

To their credit, he said, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Wage and Hour Division have worked to address these crimes by issuing fines and citations and recovering wages.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

TINIAN

From page 2

the package contained one gram of methamphetamine.

At approximately 2:58pm, King picked up the package at the airport.

At 3:05pm, a police vehicle pulled King over and an officer found the package in the back seat of King's vehicle.

During a search, a Customs officer found a crystal-like substance in a Ziploc bag covered with a paper towel inside a black pepper container. The substance later tested presumptive positive for methamphetamine,

King, in a freely given statement to investigators, admitted that his brother sent the package, and that it contained meth.

Municipal council leaders welcome new doctoral program at UOG

Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council chair Marian DLG. Tudela and vice chair Tonie Manibusan Tudela applauded University of Guam president Dr. Anita Borja-Enriquez and the UOG leadership team for enabling a game-changing effort in advancing UOG's historic launching of Guam's doctoral degree program in instructional and academic leadership that's expected to begin in fall 2024 for the region.

During the council's leadership meeting with Borja-Enriquez that was also attended by interim UOG senior vice president Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba and Dr. Alicia Aguon, dean of the School of Education, (whose family hails from Saipan), the Saipan council leaders requested that three slots be reserved for students from the Commonwealth interested in pursuing UOG's four-year 60-credit cumulative hours online doctoral program.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Marian Deleon Guerrero Tudela, chairwoman, 17th Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council; Dr. Anita Enriquez, UOG president; Tonie Manibusan Tudela, vice chairwoman, 17th Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council; Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba, UOG interim senior vice president and provost accreditation liaison officer; and Dr. Alicia Aguon, UOG dean of the School of Education.

The doctoral program is estimated at $11,000 per 15 credits per year, which includes the doctoral dissertation portion built in as coursework in the program of study.

Following the UOG approval of the doctoral program by the Board of Regents in June 2023, UOG is also undergoing an accreditation approval by the WASC Senior College and University Commission on the new program to the university.

The need for a doctoral program in Guam was the result of a random survey the university conducted of over a thousand samples consisting of respondents from the Federated States of Micronesia, the CNMI, United States, Guam, and others. The results showed 94% interest in the program, with nearly 60% coming from instructors in elementary schools, high schools and higher education university faculty.

The Saipan council leaders also introduced a resolution (2023-28-01) during the November conference of the Association of Mayors, Vice Mayors and Municipal Council.

The AMIM also unanimously adopted the resolution authored by Marian Tudela and Tonie Tudela recognizing and congratulating Borja-Enriquez on the occasion of her investiture as president of the University of Guam last Nov. 14, 2023.

Borja-Enriquez is no stranger to the CNMI. She once served as a business and economic consultant in 2000 to the CNMI Legislature. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Public Works
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

NOTICE TO ADJACENT LANDOWNERS SURROUNDING THE ROUTE 317 (GUALO RAI ROAD) IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

APPLICANT : CNMI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PROJECT : GUALO RAI ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COASTAL PERMIT #SMS-2024-025

The CNMI Department of Public Works submitted a Major Siting application to the Division of Coastal Resources Management for the improvement of Gualo Rai Road on 23 January 2024. The application was assigned Coastal Permit No. SMS-2024-025.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project begins at the intersection with Route 33 (Beach Road) and Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) to Historia Place. The length of the project is approximately 0.59 miles. The beginning of the project consists of a coral road from Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) and Route 33 (Beach Road) intersection to Route 30 (Middle Road) intersection. Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) appears to be in bad shape with some areas that has smooth surface but with few irregularities. Right-of-way varies from approximately 50 to 55 - feet in width.

There are faded visible pavement markings going uphill to the intersection of Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) and Route 30 (Middle Road) from the courthouse. There are pedestrian facilities along this intersection of roadway such as an intersection crosswalk, and sidewalk. Signage consists of street signs, and business signs. There are numerous power poles, steep slopes, existing swales and other utilities that will be considered or not in the design of this new roadway.

The proposed improvements include:

- New Hot Asphaltic Concrete Pavement, Base and Subbase
- New Pavement Markings and Signs
- New Concrete Sidewalks
- New Drainage Structures such as Concrete Swale and Rolled Curb & Gutter
- New Underground Infiltration/Detention Tank/Pipe
- Improvements of Intersections at Route 33 and Rai Road

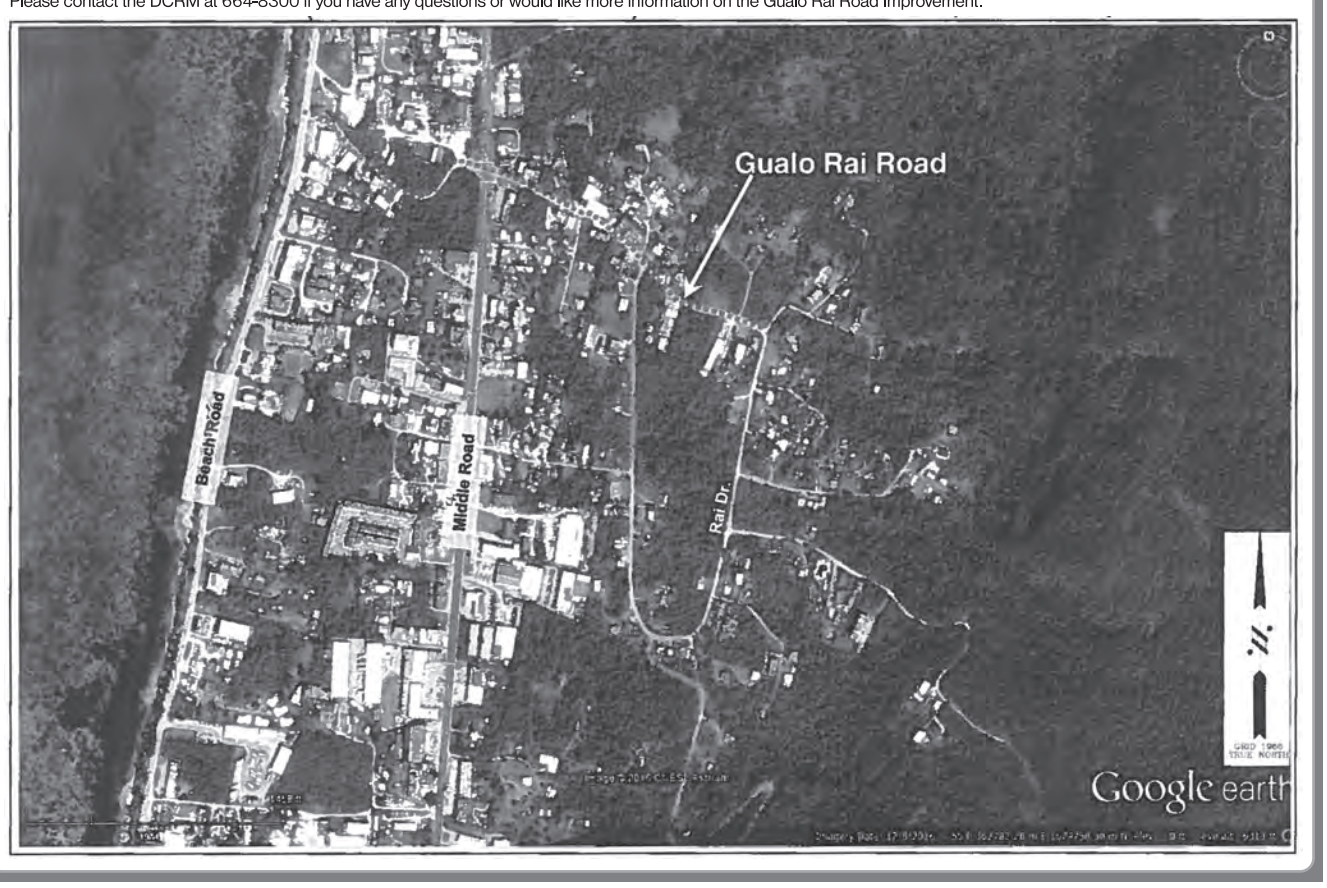
In order to meet Federal roadway design guidelines that address the management of surface water runoff and drainages, two ponding basins were incorporated into road design plans; one just east of the District Court parking lot (District Court Ponding Basin) and one on the eastern end of the project area, adjacent to Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) (East Ponding Basin). The capacity of the proposed District Court Ponding Basin would be 304 ft^3; this ponding basin would capture overflow from the East Ponding Basin. The capacity of the proposed East Ponding Basin would be 30,434 ft^3; this ponding basin would mitigate flooding that discharges towards the District Court Ponding Basin and Route 33 (Beach Road).

Biological surveys for the proposed East Ponding Basin were conducted by CNMI Infrastructure and Recovery Program (IRP) biologists between 28 April and 1 June 2022 to determine whether federally threatened or endangered species would be affected by the proposed action. No federally threatened or endangered species were detected during the surveys.

This notice is being issued to comply with NMIAC § 15-10-206(e)(2)(i) "Alternative Adjacent Property Owner Notification".

Written comments can be submitted by mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or emailed to permitting@dcrm.gov.mp.

Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300 if you have any questions or would like more information on the Gualo Rai Road Improvement.



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
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Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 03-2024

Opening date: February 12, 2024 **Closing date: March 1, 2024**

Location: SAIPAN **SALARY**
Position(s): (1) Staff Attorney **UNGRADED**

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, March 1, 2024.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) NMHC IFB 2024-004

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: February 13, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Construction of New 1.0 MG Kagman Water Tank Project

Project Package will be available on December 28, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

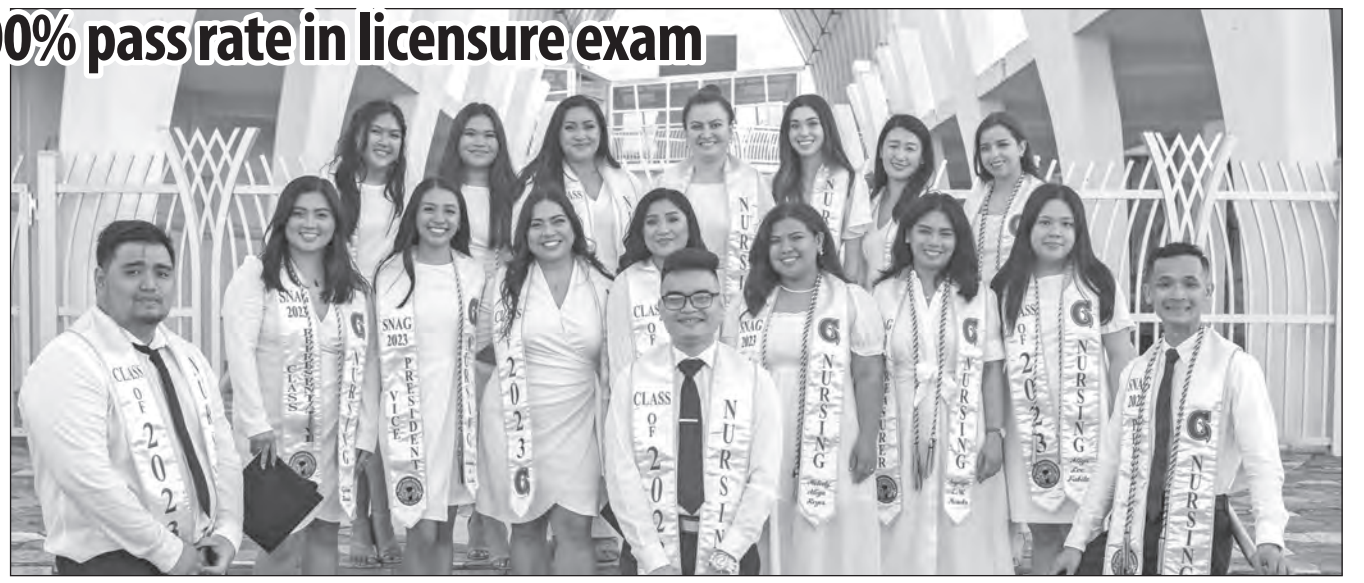
A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office Conference located in Garapan, Saipan on **January 09, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

UOG nursing grads achieve 100% pass rate in licensure exam



UOG

The Fañomnåkan (spring) 2023 graduates of the University of Guam's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program achieved a 100% pass rate after taking the National Council Licensure Exam for the first time. First row, from left, Ezechiel Palacol, Genry Topacio and Mason C. Calma. Second row, from left, Cyrene Bansil, Jasmine Quinto, Jaena Claire Cabrera, Jamila Olivares, Melody A. Reyes, Angelique L.W. Morales, and Aliya L. Fabila. Third row, from left, Joleene Mendoza, Chasnel A. Dela Cruz, Krystal Pilante, Nicole Reyes, Alexis Santos, Nan Wang, and Shelby Weilbacher.

The Fañomnåkan (spring) 2023 graduates of the University of Guam's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program achieved a 100% pass rate after taking the National Council Licensure Exam for the first time, securing their licenses as registered nurses.

"This recent achievement further validates the quality of our Nursing Program and our continued efforts to provide a career pipeline that meets the needs of our healthcare sectors in Guam and the Micronesia region," said UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez. "Our Nursing Program is on par with some of the best in the nation."

Spring 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 graduates of the UOG's Nursing Program also achieved a 100% pass rate as first-time test takers. Each group of spring graduates of the UOG Nursing Program from 2020 to 2022 achieved a 95% pass rate or higher, showing resiliency and rising above the pandemic-related challenges that made practicums and classroom learning more challenging.

"We are very proud of our Spring 2023 cohort for having achieved 100% first-time pass rate on the NCLEX despite having to overcome delayed admission to the program during the pandemic," said Dr. Yvette Paulino, interim dean of the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health at UOG. "Most importantly, we have produced 17 more registered nurses to serve our community."

The university's nursing graduates have always achieved passing rates above the national pass rate every year, in recent years, said Paulino.

"We are thankful for the Nursing Program's partnerships with island clinics, hospitals, government of Guam agencies, and other health care providers for allowing our students to receive real-life training," said Enriquez. The Nursing Program has cultivated partnerships with the Department of Public Health and Social Services, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, Guam Regional Medical City, Health Care Services of the Pacific, FHP Clinic, Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center, the Department of Education, Department of Corrections, and Naval Hospital Guam.

Paulino commends the Nursing faculty including Dr. Ana Joy Mendez, Dr. Anna Varghese, Dr. Rosielyn Babauta, Antoinette Kleiner, Sandra Cruz, and Veronica Alave for holding the program and the students to a high standard. She also acknowledged recently retired professor Dr. Kathryn Wood and numerous former instructors whose mentorships have helped many nursing students succeed.

The Nursing Program's faculty also honors the legacy of the late Dr. Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima whose tireless efforts as the dean led to the Nursing Program's engagement with the community through outreach efforts and in providing a quality education that aligns with the healthcare needs on the island and the region.

To learn more about the Nursing Program, go to https://catalog.uog.edu/current/programs/school-of-health/nursing.php. ***(UOG)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950|
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

INVITATION FOR BID

PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-007-24
SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 15, 2024: 2:00 P.M.

PROVIDE AND INSTALL SIX (6) BRAND NEW COMMERCIAL A/C UNITS FRANCISCO M. BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP AT THE COMMONWONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) ACCOUNTING OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BEGINNING FEBRUARY 12, 2024. AN ADMINISTRATIVE PAYMENT OF $100.00 SHALL BE PAID TO CPA BEFORE A BIDDER MAY OBTAIN THE BID PACKAGE. PAYMENTS SHALL BE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, OR CREDIT CARD.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "PROVIDE AND INSTALL SIX (6) BRAND NEW COMMERCIAL A/C UNITS (**IFB-007-24**)" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR BEFORE 2:00 P.M., MARCH 15, 2024. BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

LEO B. TUDELA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DATE: _____

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-003-24

SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF TYPHOON RESISTANT ACCORDION ALUMINUM SHUTTERS AT THE FRANCISCO M. BORJA TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to supply and install typhoon resistant accordion aluminum shutters at the Francisco M. Borja/Tinian International Airport, Tinian, CNMI. The Scope of Work and other considerations will be available for pick up beginning **February 12, 2024**, upon payment of $100.00 in cash, cashier's check or certified check to the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport.

Proposals will be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport no later than **2:00 P.M. CHST, March 15, 2024.** Proposals received after the date/time indicated above will not be opened and will be returned to the Proposer.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a bid bond, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than **ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount**. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

_____ Date: _____
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-009

ROTA WATER CAVE ENCLOSURE/ REPLACEMENT OF WOOD STAIRS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Rota Water Cave Enclosure / Replacement of Wood Stairs in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists, in general, of the installation of a new 2-inch Sch. 40 G.I. Pipes Stairs and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Public Law 20-61.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **150 calendar days** from the date of award of the contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 24, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-009, Rota Water Cave Enclosure / Replacement of Wood Stairs Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Comme cial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 13, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, Project Engineer – via email at edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

5 UOG students earn internships at a leading national lab in renewable energy

UOG

University of Guam students, from left, Hallie Hainrik, Irish Fontanilla, Tristan Pajela, Brandon Respicio, and Cassandra Paule are heading to a 10-week summer internship at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. UOG announced on Friday, Feb. 9, they have been selected for the internship.

UOG

The University of Guam students heading to Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for a summer internship are, fifth from left, Hallie Hainrik, Irish Fontanilla, Tristan Pajela, Cassandra Paule and Brandon Respicio. Joining them are Dr. John Limtiaco, chemistry professor; Dr. Cheryl Sangueza, mentor; Olympia Terral, extension associate; senior vice president and provost Sharleen Santos Bamba; UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez; Dr. Pamela Peralta, interim vice provost; and Cathleen Moore-Linn, executive director of the Research Corporation of the University of Guam.

A grant funded by the U.S. Department of Energy will be sending five University of Guam students to the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington for a 10-week immersive research experience this summer.

Their internships are the result of a partnership between the University of Guam and PNNL and funding from U.S. DOE through the Basic Energy Sciences-Reaching a New Energy Sciences Workforce grant. The grant fosters mentoring to undergraduate students in their pursuit of a career in STEM-related fields.

"We have advanced our ecosystem of support for student researchers, with faculty providing mentorship and pathways to internship opportunities," said UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez. "We have scientists in the making at UOG, and, along with our future nurses, teachers, accountants, social workers, and engineers, and others, they will one day become part of our professional workforce on the island and region to support renewable energy and other STEM-related innovative solutions."

Dr. Pamela Peralta, interim vice provost, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs who also is the director of Contracts and Grants at UOG, said the students will receive hands-on training while they learn about cutting-edge scientific research and technology.

"They will be learning alongside PNNL's great minds in renewable and clean energy and will bring back home their knowledge about climate change and sustainable energy," according to Peralta.

Dr. John Limtiaco, a UOG chemistry professor, said, "These students will learn important research and laboratory skills while making lasting personal and professional connections." He also honed his knowledge about renewable energy at PNNL last summer.

The five UOG students come from different backgrounds in their pursuit of a STEM education.

Hallie Hainrik, a freshman majoring in biology, works with the 4H program at UOG and finds joy in sharing science with kindergarten to 12th-grade students whose eyes light up when she performs simple experiments with them.

Irish Fontanilla, a sophomore working on a pre-med track, said she will use the internship experience to help her define her career goals.

Cassandra Paule, a junior pursuing a dual major in biology-chemistry, aspires to work in the renewable energy field.

Tristan Pajela, a senior studying civil engineering, wants to incorporate the fields of engineering and alternative energy in his future career.

Brandon Respicio, a senior pursuing a bachelor's in education, wants to learn more about mathematics and programming in data analysis to solve real-world problems. ***(UOG)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-004

COMMONWEALTH DRIVE WATERLINE INSTALLATION PHASE I PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of installation of new distribution line along Commonwealth Drive; connecting the new waterline to existing water mains; and installation of a new pressure reducing valve. The work is also inclusive of installation of new service laterals and water meters with individual pressure reducing valves, and relocation or reconnection of existing service laterals to new distribution line also with individual pressure reducing valve. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 270 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 23, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-004, Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Phase I Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 14, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at *manny.sablan@cucgov.org* with a copy to Mr. Aristotle Anicete, Project Engineer – via email at *aristotle.anicete@cucgov.org* and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at *christie.sablan@cucgov.org*

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

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Opinion

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Saipan Tribune
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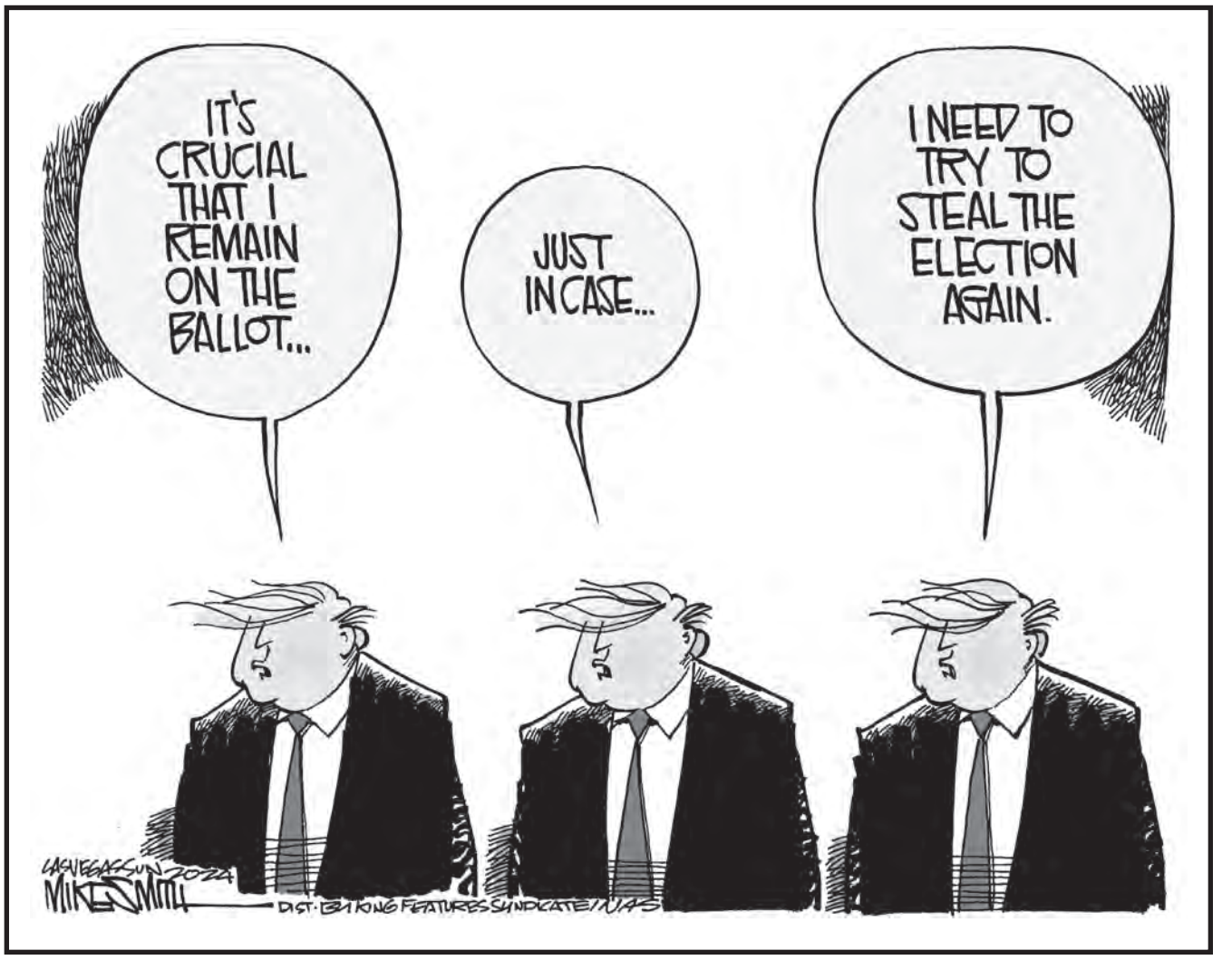
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EDITORIAL

Hamas has little interest in diplomatic solutions

Benjamin Netanyahu might have been too kind this week when he called Hamas' response to a cease-fire proposal brokered by Qatar "delusional."

"There is not a commitment—there has to be a negotiation, it's a process, and at the moment, from what I see from Hamas, it's not happening," the Israeli prime minister said Wednesday.

Yet that message has been lost on the Biden administration.

The Hamas terrorists seek a steep ransom for the innocent civilians that they took hostage during their ruthless Oct. 7 massacre. (How many even remain alive?) According to news reports, the group demands that Israel lay down its arms, pay for the reconstruction of Gaza, reinstate the Hamas governance, lift its blockade and agree to turn over scores of violent Palestinian prisoners who have been convicted of crimes in the Jewish state.

Will Iran's terror proxies then renounce their savage tactics and submit that Israel has a right to exist in peace? Of course not. They will rearm and prepare for the next indiscriminate attack months or years down the road. Hamas has little interest in any true diplomatic resolution to the havoc it created. It certainly could not care less about shielding its own civilians. Indeed, its leaders publicly state that they seek a perpetual war against Israel and, ultimately, its total elimination.

Yet U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken donned his rose-color Ray-Bans and said, "There's a lot of work to be done, but we continue to believe that an agreement is possible and indeed essential, and we will continue to work relentlessly to achieve it." President Joe Biden allowed that the Hamas response was "a little over the top."

Clearly, the Hamas strategy is to ride out the war in hopes that the United States and other world actors will lean on Israel to end its military response. At that point, the terrorists will be free to regroup and continue their deadly and barbaric assaults.

If Hamas leaders seek to stop the death and destruction, they have the means to do so. Instead, they repeatedly reject peace and choose to escalate the cycle of mayhem. Rather than sending mixed signals about this nation's support for one of its staunchest allies, Blinken should make it abundantly clear to the terror group that it is now paying the consequences for having repeatedly chosen the wrong path.

Let's remember that the current conflict began with an unprecedented Hamas attack on Israel, leaving 1,200 people dead and thousands injured. Israel did not initiate this war. For Hamas to now suggest that Israel should agree to a cease-fire that re-empowers those who seek its destruction is, indeed, delusional.

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I stopped drinking and built the life I always wanted. Why was I still so anxious?

By KEVIN LAVELLE
Los Angeles Times

Kevin Lavelle is a freelance writer living in Echo Park.

After a wildly successful drinking career, I finally retired 11 years ago. I'd love to say that it was a considered decision after mature reflections and conversations with loved ones. But no. After yet another solo drinking spree, I woke up fully clothed on the cold hard tiles of my bathroom floor. Mornings like this had led to weeks of sobriety before. But this day, it felt different, and as I vowed never to self-medicate again, I knew I was done for good.

The winter after I stopped drinking, I wrote a horror screenplay, full of betrayal and torture, an accurate reflection of my state of mind. Less than a year later, I had moved to L.A. and co-written a sitcom, a manifestation of my lightened spirit. Still, something inside didn't feel quite right. I had emerged from my addiction alive and physically healthy. I had a supportive social circle. I moved in with my dream girlfriend. I was Kevin 2.0, relaunched with energy and enthusiasm. So why was I often anxious? Wasn't this the life I had always wanted?

Perhaps because I'm Irish, from a culture that tends to believe that when good fortune blesses you, it won't stick around long enough for you to enjoy it, I wouldn't ever feel at ease. In America, amid the U.S.' endless pursuit of personal and professional perfection, was I denying who I was?

Where I grew up, men didn't discuss problems; they deflected and joked and drowned them in alcohol. And being outgoing was essential. Quiet children were seen as faulty, in need of being fixed. Over the years, being called "quiet" became the worst insult you could throw at me.

The truth was I had struggled with anxiety and despair since I was a teenager, a weight so heavy I sometimes couldn't get out of bed. Playing video games for days at a time in my youth pointed to my future career as a film and TV editor, locked in a dark safe world with only the problems on a screen to solve. But I also yearned to belong.

Enter alcohol.

All my early relationships started at parties or in bars or clubs. Soon I didn't know how to be around people without drinking. I silenced the quiet, studious kid in me, drowning him in delicious red wine.

Once I got sober and moved to the U.S., I was sure that if I pushed hard enough, I could control every aspect of my life. I chased relationships with women who I thought Kevin 2.0 deserved to be with. Adventurous movers and shakers. Each time I did my best to keep up, but eventually got exhausted and tapped out. In my professional life I modeled positivity, suppressing my natural cynicism for fear of being called a downer. My overworking caused me to crash and burn for weeks at a time, but I always came back for more. And despite successfully not drinking for years, the ghosts that alcohol had once fed continued to haunt me, and it started to show.

In 2022, I went on a boat trip in the south of France with some lifelong friends to celebrate our 50th birthdays. I was nervous about sailing through wine country with enthusiastic drinkers in a confined space. So while they chilled on deck, drinking, I worked out and ran around playing photographer. Several days into the trip I had exhausted myself with busywork and eventually gave myself permission to relax and enjoy our time together. But as soon as I got home, I went back into overdrive.

My family from Ireland visited me in September, and I was their tour guide for the week. My extreme efforts to put on a brave face didn't fool my youngest sister. After a vulnerable conversation, she suggested I ask my doctor about medication. I had always thought that taking a drug, whether recreational or prescribed, would be cheating. I had vowed to never artificially alter my mental state, to never hide from my emotions or problems again. But to my huge surprise, a wave of relief washed over me, and I said yes.

I'm now a few months into my medication journey and still learning to live with the effects. I realize that getting sober was just a beginning. Exchanging Ireland for L.A. was just a beginning. Starting medication was just a beginning. Forward motion is what's important. For me that means letting go of the need for perfection, the need to please, the need to be a version of myself that is unrealistic and ultimately damaging.

But I'm starting to learn to say: Hey, Kevin 3.0, this is you. Just deal with it. And let go.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Doom spending is not self-care

By SARAH GREEN CARMICHAEL
Bloomberg Opinion

Sarah Green Carmichael is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist and editor. Previously, she was an executive editor at* Harvard Business Review.

Please, don't dabble in doom spending.

The term, which first bubbled up on social media, has gained steam following a recent survey by Intuit's Credit Karma. Consider it 2024's sequel to 2023's "girl math." But if girl math was a light-hearted buddy comedy, doom spending is a horror film.

It's not the same as retail therapy—shopping to ease personal woes like a breakup or a bad day at work. Doom spending is "spending money despite concerns about the economy and foreign affairs to cope with stress," says the credit-tracking company, and about 27% of Americans say they're doing it.

Self-reported rates of doom spending are higher among men; according to Credit Karma's survey, 33% of men admit to doing it compared with only 21% of women. But it's the women I'm more worried about, because women already typically face a tougher road to financial independence. We earn, save and invest less. We have more student debt.

The survey also finds that young women are much more likely to doom spend than their mothers and older sisters. Throw in the financial precarity dogging millennials and Gen Z—the New York Fed noted Tuesday that a rise credit card and auto loan delinquencies was especially pronounced among younger borrowers—and you have a recipe for misery.

"The economy sucks, there's global warming, there's constant political and social unrest globally," one 24-year-old told Bloomberg News, justifying her purchase of the occasional "little luxury," like the vintage Chanel bag she picked up for $2,500. (Fact check: While inflation has been painful, it would be a real stretch to say this economy objectively sucks.)

"It's just easier to spend money on things that will bring you immediate fulfillment," she continued, especially when saving doesn't seem to bring life's major expenditures—a home, children—any closer.

She's right that the rising cost of living has hit younger people, along with all lower-earning people, especially hard. But at the risk of sounding like a scold, a little luxury is a latte, not a four-figure bag.

Consumer economies thrive by stoking our fears that we'll be left behind if we don't buy the new, new thing. "Our susceptibility to status symbols comes from our deep need to be accepted, but it is also a way of protecting ourselves," writes psychology professor Bruce Hood in Possessed: Why We Want More Than We Need. Luxury goods may change how people perceive us—or, just as important, how we see ourselves.

When resources feel scarce or our situation chaotic, we focus on what we can control. Expensive items carry even more heft in social groups where truly big-ticket items like houses are seen as out of reach, Hood notes in the book. The power of luxury goods comes from the way human beings constantly compare ourselves. It's easy to forget that the couple posting enviable photos of their new home might not be able to afford it—or conversely, that they may have benefitted from inherited wealth.

Corporate marketing departments have long been aware of these psychological tricks. And they've long chased after the female consumer, who controls the majority of household's discretionary spending despite her lower earning power.

Historically, those appeals targeted the female buyer's independence and self-worth, whether that's "You've come a long way, baby," (Virginia Slims pitching equal opportunity lung cancer) or "Because you're worth it" (L'Oreal selling hair dye). The modern equivalent would be all those algorithm-targeted ads selling teas, acupressure mats and subscription supplements as "self-care."

Doom spending is this same splurge-to-treat-yourself message in the Upside Down. "You'll never get there, baby," or "Because nothing's worth it."

But young women literally can't afford to give into such cynicism. In a 2022 report by the Financial Health Network, 44% of women ages 18-29, compared with 34% of men the same age, said debt has led them to delay major life milestones like marriage, homeownership and children. Women are also more likely to say their debts are unmanageable.

Putting yourself in a financial hole isn't smart or empowering.

Real self-care is creating and sticking to a budget. It's true that the old rules of thumb—50% for needs, 30% for wants, 20% for savings and paying down debt—might not be possible, particularly for younger earners who are earlier in their careers. Housing, food and transportation could eat up 50% of your budget, as they do in the average American household, before you even get to necessities like health care or education. But that doesn't mean we throw up our hands and buy Chanel. It means we save 10%, or 5%, or whatever we can manage. It means we try to move up the income ladder while also fighting for a fairer society. It means our splurges are $250, not $2,500.

There's nothing wrong with a little girl math—like dividing the cost of a purchase over the number of times you're likely to use it (that's basically just a form of amortization). There is something deeply wrong with seeking a momentary mood-boost by spending money you don't have, and then ending up with credit card debt or with nothing saved for retirement.

If we ignore that math, doom spending may go from nihilistic coping mechanism to self-fulfilling prophecy.

Anti-DEI laws are trying to silence underrepresented voices

By TOMMY MOUTON, PJ RAVAL, ANNETTE RODRIGUEZ, MARYBETH SCHMITT, and ANGELA WARD
THE FULCRUM

The recent attack on Claudine Gay, Harvard University's first Black female president, is one of many attempts by elements of the right wing to radicalize higher education by censuring diverse voices. Another—the Texas Legislature's ban on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in public institutions of higher education—went into effect on Jan. 1.

Senate Bill 17 states that any program or policy that affords "special benefit" to marginalized groups must end. But the law fails to address the systemic barriers and historic discrimination that necessitated development of the DEI programs in the first place. As such, SB-17 is gatekeeping knowledge access and threatening the civil liberties of Texas citizens. It should serve as a warning to other states.

In 2008, 85% of experts writing in major U.S. commentary forums were men (as identified by pronouns) and overwhelmingly white and cisgender, even though that demographic only represents 9% of the global community. White men, in other words, had an influence in public knowledge disproportionate to their representation in society—or for that matter, in academia.

The Public Voices Fellowship, a national initiative of The OpEd Project, partners with top universities and foundations across the United States to expand the number of underrepresented experts in the media, with the goal of broadening public knowledge and access. For nearly a decade, it helped scholars across the University of Texas at Austin join important national conversations. According to Katie Orenstein, founder and CEO of The OpEd Project, the fellowship is motivated by the belief "that people of all genders, identities, and backgrounds are essential to the story of our future," and, therefore, SB-17 mandated its cancellation.

Stories that are told publicly affect policies, community conversations, research initiatives, creative works and more. As fellows of the ninth cohort of The Public Voices Fellowship at UT Austin, we have experienced the program's impact firsthand. Since August, members of our cohort have published pieces on book bans, personalized AI, trauma and learning loss, child sexual trauma, deadly immigration policies, and organ transplant equity, as well as directed a documentary highlighting Asian Black solidarity and intergenerational exchange. We are shocked by the fellowship's disruption and concerned about how this anti-DEI legislation will impact whose stories are allowed to shape our world.

Certainly we need informed experts from a myriad of backgrounds and experiences to solve the world's most pressing issues. The problem comes when one group's experiences are privileged over others. The voices of white, cisgender men have never been silenced. They continue to publish the majority of all op-eds.

In a fully liberated and just society, DEI programs would not be needed. People of all identities would experience equal opportunities to succeed and share their expertise. We do not yet live in that world. Underrepresented experts don't need DEI programs to bypass determinations of merit but rather to bypass longstanding, discriminatory practices. Because DEI programs threaten the comforts of the most privileged in our society, SB-17 was passed—directly diminishing access for those representing the global majority to create and share knowledge.

SB-17 has already had a profound impact on higher education in Texas. Leaders at the helm of university inclusion efforts have lost their jobs, faculty are leaving the state, and recruitment of faculty is tenuous, threatening the integrity of top-tier research institutions and limiting representation for students. Even though research and teaching are technically protected from the new law, faculty are being asked to strip all evidence of inclusive practices from their websites out of an abundance of caution, casting doubt on whether culturally responsive scholarship is actually protected and threatening the integrity of students' academic experiences, safety and belonging.

This attack on knowledge access is not confined to Texas. Since the summer of 2023, the Supreme Court has struck down affirmative action, five states have passed legislation ending DEI programs and another 40 bills across 22 states have restricted DEI initiatives at public universities. The eradication of support for anyone other than white, straight, cisgendered males has been reframed as a " return to merit-based decisions"—language that obscures a host of advantages that perpetuate centuries of inequity and discrimination.

SB-17 ensures those in power have unhindered opportunities to shape our society's narrative by eliminating the voices of experts with different lived experiences and serves as a warning to citizens in other states. If we want to live in a just and informed society, then higher education institutions must be allowed to protect and promote the voices of their entire community. Without programs like the Public Voices Fellowship, reactionary extremists will continue to wield their agendas using legislation to silence the global majority and preserve white institutional power.

Anti-DEI legislation is a threat to democracy and must be denounced. Our voices matter now more than ever. We have an opportunity in 2024 to give careful consideration as we choose leaders, to choose whose voices we hear. To quote The OpEd Project, "The stories we tell become the world we live in."

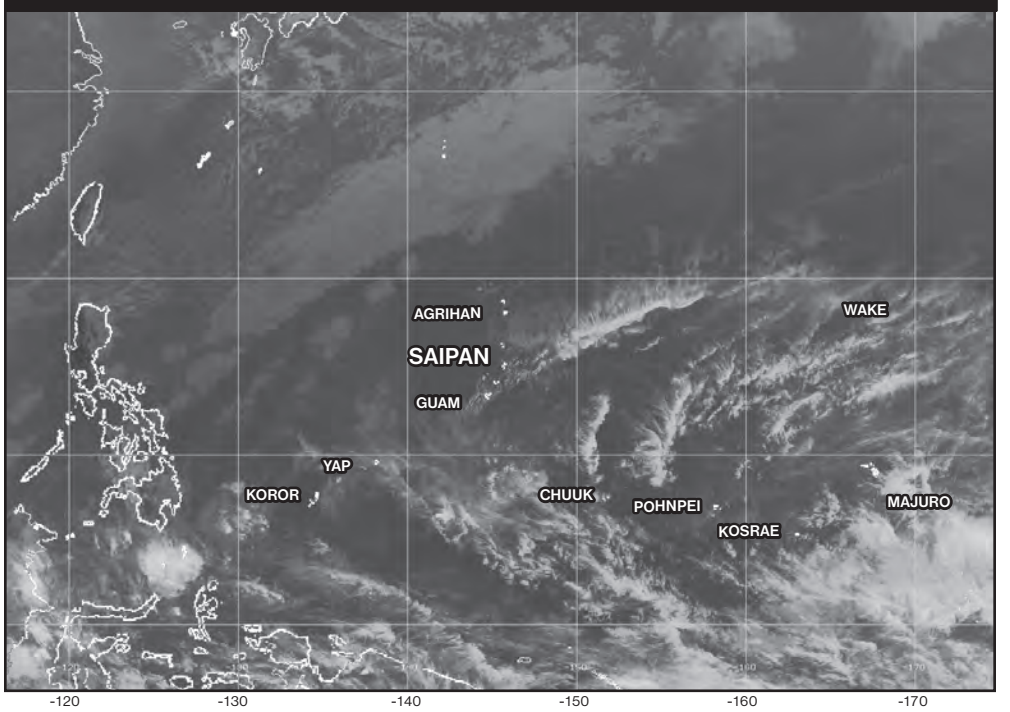
Mouton is an assistant professor of English at Huston-Tillotson University. Raval is a documentary filmmaker. Rodriguez is an assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin. Schmitt directs the Children's Language, Literacy, and Learning Lab at UT Austin. Ward is the CEO of 2Ward Equity Consulting. They were public voices fellows with The OpEd Project before UT Austin's participation in the program was canceled.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Breezy to windy. Partly cloudy with light showers. Northeast winds 20 to 30 mph.	Breezy to windy. Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Breezy to windy. Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Breezy to windy. Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
85 76°	85 76°	85 76°	85 76°	85 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:26 AM SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery is showing partly cloudy with hit-or-miss trade showers. Latest buoy and altimetry data indicating seas of 5 to 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85° / 77°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	83° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Majuro	Cloudy	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Tuesday	6:42 AM	6:19 PM
Wednesday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM
Thursday	6:41AM	6:20 PM
Friday	6:41AM	6:20 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:27 AM	8:42 PM	-
Tuesday	9:09 AM	9:40 PM	-
Wednesday	9:51 AM	10:38 PM	-
Thursday	10:33 AM	11:35 PM	-
Friday	11:18 AM	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 57°
Beijing	Sunny	39° / 21°
Hong Kong	Sunny	64° / 52°
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	76° / 62°
London	Cloudy	37° / 30°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	70° / 56°
Manila	Showers	84° / 72°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82° / 63°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81° / 67°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	61° / 36°
Osaka	Rain	45° / 36°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 28°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	48° / 34°
Rome	Cloudy	57° / 46°
Salem	Cloudy	74° / 52°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	43° / 32°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	30° / 16°
Tokyo	Showers	46° / 36°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	64° / 42°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:20 AM	Low Tide	-0.48
9:55 AM	High Tide	1.90
3:52 PM	Low Tide	0.65
9:12 PM	High Tide	1.89

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

DOI announces nearly $7M through Investing in America agenda

» Effort advances climate resilience, restore lands and waters in US territories

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Department of the Interior announced nearly $7 million from President Biden's Investing in America agenda to advance climate resilience and restore lands and waters through impactful ecosystem restoration work in the U.S. territories.

A $3.9-million investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will support programs and projects in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam to advance biosecurity efforts, restore coastal areas and flora ecosystems and support the eradication of invasive species. Another $3 million from the Inflation Reduction Act will help Puerto Rico in combatting climate change.

"The U.S. territories are an integral part of the fabric of America," said Secretary Deb Haaland. "As the department stewards new investments from the President's Investing in America agenda, we are working closely with our territorial partners to ensure they make the largest impact and reach as many communities as possible—particularly as these communities increasingly face the acute impacts of the climate crisis on their communities and ecosystems."

"President Biden's Investing in America agenda provides funding for transformational investments in our nation's infrastructure—and that extends to our partners in the U.S. territories," said Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. "The Office of Insular Affairs is committed to supporting these critical investments in the territories and supporting resilient physical and natural infrastructure."

The announcement helps advance the Interior Department's Restoration and Resilience Framework, a plan to leverage historic investments in climate and conservation to achieve landscape-level outcomes across the nation—including through a commitment to building resilient islands. Through the Investing in America agenda, the Department is implementing more than $2 billion to restore our nation's lands and waters and build climate resilience.

Projects and programs announced today funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law include:

■ $1,799,000 to American Samoa to support the development of the first biosecurity plan and biosecurity efforts, restoration of coastal areas in locations affected by sand and coral mining, coral reef restoration and outreach efforts, and the revegetation of degraded wetland mangrove forest zones with native mangroves and other native trees.

■ $975,000 to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to support the restoration of flora ecosystems, assessing inactive quarries and exploring restoration and reclamation of those quarries, and supporting invasive species efforts throughout the territory.

■ $971,000 to the U.S. Virgin Islands to support the development of an early detection and rapid response framework of invasive species and support surveys of plant communities that connect northern and southern shorelines across St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John.

■ $154,000 to Guam for participation of territorial representatives from American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the 2023 Regional Biosecurity Training in Guam hosted by the Department's Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) for the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

Projects funded through the Inflation Reduction Act include:

■ $2,750,000 for the U.S. Geological Survey to help address workforce capacity challenges and increase the climate expertise of Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources. Funds will be used to develop Puerto Rico's climate workforce through trainings, fellowships, and practicum opportunities for recent graduates and to allow DNER employees to receive advanced degrees focused on climate adaptation.

■ $250,000 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue implementation of the National Seed Strategy in Puerto Rico. Investments will put seed collecting teams on the ground in Puerto Rico and invest in seed production in order to ensure an adequate supply of native seeds that can restore ecosystems degraded by fires, hurricanes, drought, and other natural disasters.

This funding also advances the President's Justice40 Initiative that set a goal to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

The Inflation Reduction Act provided the Office of Insular Affairs with $15 million to support climate change planning, mitigation, adaptation and resilience for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Other funding was announced last year.

More information about this and other funding provided to the Insular Areas can be found on OIA's website. ***(PR)***

US Coast Guard, Navy Helicopter Squadron execute critical medical evacuation of Filipino mariner offshore of Saipan

SANTA RITA, Guam— In a display of exceptional interagency cooperation, a commercial mariner in urgent need of medical care was safely evacuated to Guam on Feb. 9, 2024, thanks to the swift actions of the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy's Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25.

"This successful medical evacuation underscores the strong partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard, HSC-25, and Guam Fire Rescue. Our commitment to the safety of mariners in distress is unwavering, and today's mission exemplifies that dedication," said Cmdr. Greg Sickels, deputy commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, highlighting the seamless collaboration.

Responders initiated the operation after a 37-year-old Filipino mariner aboard the 1,202-foot Germany-flagged container ship *Antwerpen Express*, located 50 miles off Saipan, exhibited symptoms indicative of a stroke. The U.S. Coast Guard's Joint Rescue Sub-Center in Guam was alerted on the evening of Feb. 6 when the vessel was approximately 550 nautical miles northeast of Saipan. Following a recommendation from the duty flight surgeon for a medical evacuation, HSC-25 mobilized to assist.

An MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter crew from HSC-25 reached the *Antwerpen Express* on the morning of Feb. 9. The mariner was then airlifted from the ship in 7-foot seas and winds of 16 mph, and delivered to the capable hands of emergency medical responders from Guam Fire Rescue at Naval Hospital Guam. They further transported him to Guam Memorial Hospital in stable condition.

US NAVY

The crew of a U.S. Navy's Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter crew airlift a commercial mariner from the motor vessel *Antwerpen Express* 50 nautical miles off of Saipan in 7-foot seas and winds of 16 mph on Feb. 9, 2024. He was delivered to the capable hands of emergency medical responders from Guam Fire Rescue at Naval Hospital Guam. They further transported him to Guam Memorial Hospital in stable condition.

"HSC-25 conducts more medical evacuations and search and rescue missions than any other Navy helicopter unit. We take great pride in our ability to support the people of Guam and mariners navigating these waters. Today's operation is a testament to our team's dedication and expertise," said Cmdr. Neil Toohey, commanding officer of HSC-25, reflecting on the squadron's critical role in the region.

The successful medical evacuation follows closely after a rescue operation by Guam Fire and HSC-25, who saved an injured hiker at San Carlos Falls on Feb. 3, demonstrating the collective commitment to saving lives, the local community, and mariner safety. ***(USCG)***

Become a delegate at the 2024 Democratic National Convention

The Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands will host its Presidential Primary from March 5-12.

Though the focus of the primary is to elect local Democrats' preferred presidential candidate, of equal importance is the election of delegates who will represent the Northern Marianas at the 2024 Democratic National Convention. The national convention will be held in Chicago on Aug. 19-22.

Individuals interested in becoming delegates pledged to one of the presidential candidates at the 2024 Democratic National Convention are encouraged to download the Delegate Candidacy Form at www.nmidems.org, complete the form, and email it to NMI Democratic Party chair Jonathan P. Cabrera at cabrerajjp@gmail.com.

The four presidential candidates on the ballot for the NMI Primary are President Joseph R. Biden Jr., Jason M. Palmer, Rep. Dean Phillips (D-Minnesota), and Marianne Williamson.

To learn more about the presidential candidates and the delegate selection process, visit www.nmidems.org. The deadline to file delegate candidacies is Feb. 26, 2024. Don't miss this opportunity to have a voice in choosing the next President of the United States! ***(PR)***

Busines

Thousands of doctors in England to strike again

LONDON (AP)—Thousands of doctors in the early years of their careers in England are to go on strike later this month for another five-day stretch as their long-standing pay dispute with the British government remains in stasis.

» As health likely to become a key UK election issue

The British Medical Association, the union that represents the so-called junior doctors, said on Friday that the government had "failed to meet the deadline to put an improved pay offer on the table" and that they would go on strike from Feb. 24 to Feb. 28.

The junior doctors, who form the backbone of hospital and clinical care as they train up to be specialists in a particular field, have walked off the job on nine occasions over the past year and last month they went on strike for six days, the longest in the history of the state-funded National Health Service.

"We remain willing to carry on talking and to cancel the forthcoming strikes if significant progress is made and a credible offer is put forward," the BMA's junior doctors committee co-chairs Dr. Robert Laurenson and Dr. Vivek Trivedi said.

The union says newly qualified doctors earn 15.53 pounds ($19.37) an hour—the U.K. minimum wage is just over 10 pounds an hour—though salaries rise rapidly after the first year. The BMA has been asking for 35% "pay restoration" as its starting position, but has said it is willing to negotiate.

The Conservative government has said it won't negotiate unless the union calls off the strike.

"We already provided them with a pay increase of up to 10.3% and were prepared to go further," said Health Secretary Victoria Atkins. "I ask the junior doctors' committee to cancel their action and come back to the table to find a way forward for patients and our NHS."

Senior doctors, known as consultants, and other medics have been drafted in to cover for emergency services, critical care and maternity services during the strikes. The consultants themselves are also in dispute with the government over their recent pay award but have yet to set any dates for any further strikes.

GRMC's 24/7 Stroke Center Care now providing TeleStroke services

DEDEDO, Guam—Guam Regional Medical City's Advanced Primary Stroke Center, which offers a specialized program committed to providing rapid, advanced, and compassionate neurological care to treat stroke and complex cerebrovascular conditions, has extended its 24/7 care with its newly launched TeleStroke Services. These services allow patients 24/7 access to board-certified neurologists.

GRMC's TeleStroke services include high-speed audio/video conferencing and image-sharing technology that allow neurological specialists to assess & examine patients, diagnose their condition, and establish a plan of care in collaboration with on-site physicians. The stroke team also includes neurovascular interventional radiologists, neurosurgeons, intensive care, emergency medicine physicians, nurses, radiologists, pharmacists, and physical/occupational/speech-language therapists. Patients can access immediate stroke care using the latest treatment protocols to include clot-retrieval and clot-busting therapies to minimize long-term disability and save lives.

Since its opening in 2015, GRMC has provided specialized stroke care for the island. In 2022, GRMC was awarded the Gold Seal of Approval as an Advanced Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission.

GRMC's neurosciences team includes Dr. Scott C. Dulebohn, neurosurgeon and director of the Neuroscience Center; Dr. Luc Jasmin, neurosurgeon; Dr. Naho Hattori, neurologist, sleep specialist, and Stroke Medical Director; Dr. Scott Shay and Dr. Jeffrey Shay, neurointerventional radiologists; Jennifer Artero, RN, and Elisabeth Collins, DNP-APRN-NP, Stroke Program Coordinators; and Dr. Justin Hale, TeleStroke neurologist and former Stroke Medical Director.

"GRMC's goal to provide 24/7 stroke care, including the expansion of TeleStroke services, is meant to improve access to the highest quality stroke care for our entire island," said Dr. Alexander "Beau" Wielaard, CEO.

Patients who experience new signs and symptoms of stroke should immediately call 911 or proceed to GRMC's emergency department for 24/7 stroke car. Warning signs of stroke can be remembered as 'BEFAST':

- B – sudden loss of balance
- E – trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- F – face drooping
- A – arm weakness or numbness
- S – speech difficulty or slurring
- T – time to call 911

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the GRMC Referral Management Office at (671) 633-GRMC (4762) or email refer@grmc.gu. ***(PR)***

Biden admin announces $5B commitment for research and development of computer chips

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration on Friday announced the investment of $5 billion in a newly established public-private consortium aimed at supporting research and development in advanced computer chips.

The National Semiconductor Technology Center is being funded through the CHIPS and Science Act. That 2022 law aims to reinvigorate the computer chip sector within the United States through tens of billions of dollars in targeted government support.

Stakeholders in the chips industry gathered on the White House campus to discuss how the center should prioritize research and worker training for an industry poised to expand because of government backing. The coronavirus pandemic exposed the risk to the economy and national security of an overdependence on Taiwan for advanced chips, while the emergence of artificial intelligence is likely to push demand for newer and more innovative chips upward.

"This is an inflection point in the industry," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo told the group. "Not just because we're dangerously dependent on one country for so many of our chips, but because AI is going to lead to an explosion of demand for chips, for sophisticated chips, more energy-efficient chips, cost-effective chips."

The center would help to fund the design and prototyping of new chips, in addition to training workers for the sector.

Nation

WHETHER TRUMP OR BIDEN WINS

'US getting less dependable'

AP

U.S. President Joe Biden walks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, Feb. 20, 2023.

LONDON (AP)—As chances rise of a Joe Biden-Donald Trump rematch in the U.S. presidential election race, America's allies are bracing for a bumpy ride.

Many worry that a second term for Trump would be an earthquake, but tremors already abound—and concerns are rising that the U.S. could grow less dependable regardless of who wins. With a divided electorate and gridlock in Congress, the next American president could easily become consumed by manifold challenges at home—before even beginning to address flashpoints around the world from Ukraine to the Middle East.

French President Emmanuel Macron's recent verdict was blunt: America's "first priority is itself."

The first Trump administration stress-tested the bonds between the U.S. and its allies, particularly in Europe. Trump derided the leaders of some friendly nations, including Germany's Angela Merkel and Britain's Theresa May, while praising authoritarians such as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian leader Vladimir Putin. He has called China's Xi Jinping "brilliant" and Hungary's Viktor Orbán "a great leader."

In campaign speeches, Trump remains skeptical of organizations such as NATO, often lamenting the billions the U.S. spends on the military alliance whose support has been critical to Ukraine's fight against Russia's invasion.

Biden, in contrast, has made support for Ukraine a key priority and moral imperative. But Biden's assertion after his election in 2020 that "America is back" on the global stage has not been entirely borne out. Congressional Republicans have stalled more military aid for Ukraine, while America's influence has been unable to contain conflict in the Middle East

Thomas Gift, director of the Centre on U.S. Politics at University College London, said that whoever wins the presidential race, the direction of travel will be the same—toward a multipolar planet in which the United States is no longer "the indisputable world superpower."

Most allied leaders refrain from commenting directly on the U.S. election, sticking to the line that it's for Americans to pick their leader.

They are conscious that they will have to work with the eventual winner, whoever it is—and behind the scenes, governments will be doing the "backroom work" of quietly establishing links with the contenders' political teams, said Richard Dalton, a former senior British diplomat.

Haley challenges Trump on her home turf in South Carolina

CONWAY, S.C. (AP)—With two weeks to go before the South Carolina Republican primary, Nikki Haley is challenging Donald Trump on her home turf while the former president is turning to his familiar playbook of personal attacks as he tries to quash his last major rival for the nomination.

Trump, turning his campaign focus to the southern state days after an easy victory in Nevada, revved up a huge crowd of supporters at a Saturday afternoon rally in Conway, near Myrtle Beach, by touting his time in office, repeating his false claims that the 2020 election he lost was rigged, maligning a news media he sees as biased against him and lobbing attacks on Haley, her husband and President Joe Biden.

In his rally speech, Trump insulted Haley by using his derisive nickname for her, "Birdbrain," and lavished praise on South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, who endorsed him early. Trump claimed that he selected Haley to serve as his ambassador to the United Nations in 2017 and represent America on the world stage only because he was motivated to make McMaster—her second-in-command—the governor of South Carolina.

"She did a job. She was fine. She was OK. But I didn't put her there because I wanted her there at the United Nations," he said. "I wanted to take your lieutenant governor, who is right here, and make him governor."

"I wanted him because I felt he deserved it," Trump added

Trump, who has long been the front-runner in the GOP presidential race, won three states in a row and is looking to use South Carolina's Feb. 24 primary to close out Haley's chances and turn his focus fully on an expected rematch with Biden in the general election.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

N. Korea's Kim says he has no desire for talks and repeats a threat to destroy South if provoked

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un restated he has no desire for diplomacy with South Korea and that the North would annihilate its rival if provoked, state media said Friday, in the latest of his belligerent statements that are raising tensions in the region. During a visit to North Korea's Defense Ministry on Thursday, Kim said his recent moves to cut ties with South Korea allow his military to take on a more aggressive posture "by securing lawfulness to strike and destroy (the South) whenever triggered." Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have increased in recent months, with Kim elevating his weapons demonstrations and threats and the United States, South Korea and Japan strengthening their combined military exercises in response. While most South Korean officials and experts have downplayed the possibility that Kim has real intent to engage in a war, concerns about a direct military provocation have grown as the North may try to ramp up pressure in an election year in South Korea and the United States.

Japan repeatedly spots Chinese coast guard and warships near disputed waters

TOKYO (AP)—Chinese coast guard vessels have been passing by Japanese-claimed waters for weeks in the East China Sea and China's warships have been edging near Japan's southwestern islands in recent days, Japanese officials said. A fleet of four Chinese coast guard vessels on Thursday passed just outside of the territorial waters of Japan-controlled islands, which Beijing also claims, for the 49th day in a row, the Japanese Coast Guard said. It warned China's vessels against further approaching the islands, called the Senkaku in Japanese, while Beijing calls them the Diaoyu. China's Coast Guard on Tuesday acknowledged that it was patrolling waters off the Diaoyu Islands, which are also claimed by Taiwan. China routinely sends coast guard vessels and planes into waters and airspace surrounding the islands to harass Japanese vessels in the area and force Japan to scramble jets in response. Japan Coast Guard Commandant Shohei Ishii said last month that Chinese Coast Guard activity in infiltrating Japanese territorial waters violates international law, and that the "situation is extremely serious and is unpredictable."

US military drills in PH unaffected by America's focus on Ukraine and Gaza, US general says

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Combat exercises between the United States and the Philippines involving thousands of forces each year will not be affected by America's focus on the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, a U.S. general said Thursday. The Biden administration has been strengthening an arc of military alliances in the Indo-Pacific region to build deterrence and to better counter China, including in any future confrontation over Taiwan and the disputed South China Sea. But there have been concerns that the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict could hamper America's pivot to Asia and the Pacific and divert military resources intended for the region. "Certainly, it does not affect our presence," Maj. Gen. Marcus Evans, commanding general of the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division, told The Associated Press in an interview late Thursday when asked to comment on those concerns.

Death toll in landslide-hit PH mountain village rises to 11 with more than 100 missing

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Rescuers dug out more bodies from a landslide-hit southern Philippine village on Thursday, bringing the death toll to 11 as the number of missing rose to 110, officials said. At least 31 residents survived with injuries when the landslide hit the gold-mining mountain village of Masara in Davao de Oro province on Tuesday night, officials said. Army troops, police and volunteers halted their search for the missing Thursday afternoon due to fears of more landslides and will begin a "retrieval operation" on Friday, Davao de Oro provincial spokesperson Edward Macapili said by telephone. "The idea that it will be hard to find more survivors among the missing has been acknowledged," Macapili said. More than 1,165 families have been moved to evacuation centers for their safety, disaster response officials said.

India to replace military personnel in Maldives with civilians after president demanded they leave

NEW DELHI (AP)—India on Thursday said it will replace its military personnel in Maldives with civilian technical staff who will operate three aircraft from India that provide humanitarian services. The decision comes after new Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu demanded that the Indian military personnel be withdrawn by March 15. At least 75 Indian military personnel are believed to be in Maldives and their known activities include transporting patients from remote islands and rescuing people at sea. India earlier gave Maldives a Dornier airplane and two helicopters. Tensions between India and Maldives have grown since Muizzu came to power last year and adopted a pro-China stance. The Maldives Foreign Ministry said on Jan. 2 that officials from two countries met in New Delhi and agreed that India would begin withdrawing its troops from the Maldives on March 10 and complete the process by May 10. Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters on Thursday that the Indian military personnel "would be replaced by competent Indian technical persons." He did not elaborate.

Facing setbacks against resistance forces, Myanmar's military government activates conscription law

BANGKOK (AP)—Myanmar's military government on Saturday activated for the first time a decade-old conscription law that makes young men and women subject to at least two years of military service if called up, effective immediately. The announcement of the measure on state television amounts to a major, though tacit, admission that the army is struggling to contain the nationwide armed resistance against its rule. Under the 2010 People's Military Service Law, passed under a previous military government, males between the ages of 18 and 45 and females between 18 and 35 can be drafted into the armed forces for two years, extendable to five years during national emergencies. The current ruling military council, called the State Administration Council, came to power in 2021 after ousting the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The law has been activated in the wake of the army's biggest setbacks since the countrywide conflict erupted after the takeover. A surprise offensive launched last October by an alliance of armed ethnic organization in less than three months captured a large swathe of territory in northeastern Myanmar along the Chinese border. The rout inspired resistance forces in other parts of the country to launch their own attacks.

World

Ukraine needs more troops

AP

This 2023 photo provided by a 32-year-old professional soldier from Medellín, Colombia who goes by the call sign Checho shows him in his combat gear in Donbas, eastern Ukraine.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Melodic Colombian Spanish fills a hospital treating soldiers wounded fighting Russian forces in eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine's ranks are depleted by two years of war. As it battles the Russian war machine, Ukraine is welcoming hardened fighters from one of the world's longest-running conflicts.

Professional soldiers from Colombia bolster the ranks of volunteers from around the world who have answered Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's call for foreign fighters to join his nation's war with Russia.

A 32-year-old from the city of Medellin was trying to save a colleague wounded in three days of heavy fighting with Russian forces. Russian drones attacked the group and shrapnel from a grenade dropped by one pierced his jawbone.

"I thought I was going to die," said the man, who goes by the call sign Checho. The fighters insisted on being identified by their military call signs because they feared for their safety and that of their families.

"We got up and decided to run away from the position to save our lives," Checho said. "There was nowhere to hide."

Colombia's military has been fighting drug-trafficking cartels and rebel groups for decades, making its soldiers some of the world's most experienced.

With a military of 250,000, Colombia has Latin America's second-largest army, after Brazil's. More than 10,000 retire each year. And hundreds are heading to fight in Ukraine, where many make four times as much as experienced non-commissioned officers earn in Colombia, or even more.

"Colombia has a large army with highly trained personnel but the pay isn't great when you compare it to other militaries," said Andrés Macías of Bogota's Externado University, who studies Colombian work for military contractors around the world.

Retired Colombian soldiers began to head overseas in the early 2000s to work for U.S. military contractors protecting infrastructure including oil wells in Iraq. Retired members of Colombia's military have also been hired as trainers in the United Arab Emirates and joined in Yemen's battle against Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

Israel unveils tunnels underneath Gaza City HQ of UN agency for Palestinian refugees

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—The Israeli military says it has discovered tunnels underneath the main headquarters of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees in Gaza City, alleging that Hamas militants used the space as an electrical supply room.

The unveiling of the tunnels marked the latest chapter in Israel's campaign against the embattled agency, which it accuses of collaborating with Hamas.

Recent Israeli allegations that a dozen staff members participated in the Hamas attack on Israel Oct. 7 plunged the agency into a financial crisis, prompting major donor states to suspend their funding as well as twin investigations. The agency says that Israel has also frozen its bank account, embargoed aid shipments and canceled its tax benefits.

The army invited journalists to view the tunnel on Thursday.

It did not prove definitively that Hamas militants operated in the tunnels underneath the UNRWA facility, but it did show that at least a portion of the tunnel ran underneath the facility's courtyard. The military claimed that the headquarters supplied the tunnels with electricity.

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said the agency had no knowledge of the facility's underground, but the findings merit an "independent inquiry," which the agency is unable to perform due to the ongoing war.

The headquarters, on the western edge of Gaza City, are now completely decimated. To locate the tunnel, forces repeated an Israeli tactic used elsewhere in the strip, overturning mounds of red earth to produce a crater-like hole giving way to a small tunnel entrance. The unearthed shaft led to an underground passageway that an Associated Press journalist estimated stretched for at least half a kilometer (quarter of a mile), with at least 10 doors.

At one point, journalists were able to gaze upward from the tunnel, through a hole, and make eye contact with soldiers standing in a courtyard within the UNRWA facility.

Health & Wellness

Fitness trackers find new symptom of depression—body temperature

By IRENE WRIGHT
The Charlotte Observer

When a group of California researchers started a COVID-19 study in 2020 using fitness tracking rings, they didn't know they would make a leap forward for an entirely different condition.

In the earliest days of the pandemic, more than 20,000 people from 106 different countries signed up to participate in the TemPredict Study from the University of California, San Francisco, according to a Feb. 5 paper published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

The researchers set out to learn if off-the-shelf fitness and health trackers worn on the body could be used to detect the early symptoms of COVID-19, according to the study.

All participants, 20,880, bought and wore an Oura Ring, a ring that senses such data as heart rate, body temperature, oxygen levels and other fitness indicators, the researchers said.

Over the course of seven months, the participants submitted their vital signs collected by the ring and stored in a phone app, and also self-reported their emotions and mental health in daily surveys.

Could the ring predict COVID-19? Yes, the researchers found. The ring picked up signs the participants may have been infected on average 2.75 days before they tested positive, according to the study.

But that wasn't the only data that stood out to the research team.

The study found that participants with higher body temperatures also reported higher rates of depressive symptoms and feelings of depression using temperatures taken while users were awake.

"Specifically, these analyses replicated prior results showing that daytime self-reported body temperature was associated with greater depressive symptoms and build on one prior study showing that the asleep-awake body temperature difference was more than twice as large among controls relative to individuals with depression," the researchers said in the study.

While it's not clear if poor body temperature regulation is a symptom of depression or vice versa, the researchers said people with depression overall had a change to their natural immune-based feedback system.

This means that while other people go through natural temperature cycles throughout the day and over time, people experiencing depression were not, and found it harder to self-cool their bodies, according to the study.

It could be a way in for non-pharmaceutical treatment.

"Ironically, heating people up actually can lead to rebound body temperature lowering that lasts longer than simply cooling people down directly, as through an ice bath," lead author Ashley Mason said in a news release. "What is we can track the body temperature of people with depression to time heat-based treatments well?"

Mason said there is an existing small body of research that suggests putting people in hot tubs or saunas can trigger the body to self-cool, causing them to sweat. If thermoregulation is a symptom of depression, as the Oura Ring study suggests, temperature treatment could be an effective way to treat depression.

"To our knowledge, this is the largest study to date to examine the association between body temperature—assessed using both self-report methods and wearable sensors—and depressive symptoms in a geographically broad sample," Mason said. "Given the climbing rates of depression in the United States, we're excited by the possibilities of a new avenue of treatment."

The rising popularity of fitness trackers may also help more people identify symptoms of depression.

About one in five adults wore a fitness tracker, either as a band or smartwatch, in 2020, according to the Pew Research Center.

Oura, the company that developed the Oura Ring, reports more than 1 million people use their ring to track their sleep, blood oxygen levels, heart rate during workouts, and even their levels of stress, according to the website.

Many Americans also support companies using data from fitness trackers for medical research, the Pew Research Center found.

About 40% of adults in the U.S. said they would support data being used from their fitness tracker if it was being used for heart disease research, for example.

With increased use of fitness trackers and large-scale research studies analyzing the data, people across the globe may be able to play a part in solving medicine's mysteries.

Symptoms that may require a consultation with a cardiologist

As people age, many start to experience more aches and pains throughout their bodies. While many symptoms can be chalked up to the natural aging process, it's important to pay special attention to the cardiovascular system.

"Heart Month is a great time of year to remind people that not all symptoms are created equal when it comes to our cardiovascular health," says Vinayak Nagaraja, M.B.B.S., interventional cardiologist at Mayo Clinic Health System. "If you have any concerns about symptoms you may be experiencing, it's always a good idea to meet with your primary care provider to determine if you should be referred to a cardiologist."

So what are some warning signs for underlying problems? Symptoms that suggest you may need a referral to a cardiologist include:

- Chest discomfort.
- Shortness of breath.
- Swelling in your legs.
- High blood pressure.
- Abnormally fast or slow heart rate.
- Dizziness or fainting.
- Strong family history of premature heart disease or cardiac death.
- Leg pain or ulcers resulting from blood vessel diseases.

A cardiologist will evaluate your symptoms, review your medical history and may recommend diagnostic tests to appropriately diagnose the cause of your symptoms. The cardiologist also will help your healthcare team evaluate the best form of treatment for you.

Your individualized treatment plan could include:

- **Advice on diet and exercise changes**: You can lower your risk of heart disease by eating a low-fat and low-sodium diet, getting at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week, quitting smoking, and limiting alcohol intake. Dr. Nagaraja recommends eating a Mediterranean diet and avoiding red meat as well as processed food. He also suggests practicing yoga and meditation.
- **Medications**: If lifestyle changes alone aren't enough, your cardiologist may prescribe medications to control your condition. The type of medication you receive will depend on the type of heart condition and severity.
- **A cardiac procedure**: If medications aren't enough, your cardiology care team may recommend specific procedures or surgery. The type of procedure or surgery will depend on the type of heart condition and the extent of the damage to your heart. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Healthy Living

Onion types

They come in an impressive array of sizes and colors, but all belong to one of these two categories:

	Spring onions	Storage onions
Season	Spring	Late summer to early fall
Flesh	Soft, with long green foliage	Firm, with dry skin
Flavor	Mild or sweet	Pungent
Use	Eaten fresh, often raw	Store well; usually cooked

Source: The Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition, TNS Photo Service

Massachusetts doctors push for measles vaccination after cases reported in states

By RICK SOBEY
Boston Herald

ERIN HOOLEY

Vaccines including varicella, hepatitus A, prevnar and measles, mumps and rubella at Lurie Children's Primary Care Town & Country Pediatrics on Oct. 18, 2022, in Chicago. U.S. doctors in early 2024 are urging families to get vaccinated against measles following a troubling rise in measles cases across several U.S. states and Europe.

Local doctors are urging families to get vaccinated against measles following a troubling rise in measles cases across several U.S. states and Europe.

The CDC over the last couple of months has been notified of 23 confirmed U.S. cases of measles. That includes two outbreaks with more than five cases each, and seven direct importations of measles by international travelers.

In Philadelphia, the city's health department reported an outbreak of nine measles cases.

"The Massachusetts Medical Society is concerned about reported cases of measles in Europe and at least six states and potential exposures at two large United States airports and wishes to remind all patients in the Commonwealth to do their part to protect themselves and their communities from contracting and spreading measles," said Massachusetts Medical Society President Barbara Spivak.

Most of the 23 confirmed U.S. cases were among children and adolescents who had not received a measles-containing vaccine, even if age eligible.

"Because of a successful vaccination campaign that effectively eliminated measles in the United States in 2000, many people may not be aware that measles, which is transmitted via exposure to contact with airborne droplets, is highly contagious and can lead to serious and life-threatening complications," Spivak said. "Children and those with compromised immune systems are especially at risk."

Measles cases often originate from unvaccinated or undervaccinated U.S. residents who travel internationally and then transmit the disease to people who are not vaccinated against measles.

The recent jump of measles importations from abroad reflects the rise in global measles cases and a growing threat from the disease.

"As a community, our best defense against the spread of measles remains ensuring that children receive their measles, mumps, and rubella vaccinations following Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines — two doses, one at 12 to 15 months, the next between the ages of 4 and 6," Spivak said.

"The vaccine is safe and highly effective and generally induces lifelong immunity," the Massachusetts Medical Society president added. "If you, or a child for whom you care have not been fully vaccinated or you have questions about the vaccine, we urge you to speak to a trusted health care provider as soon as possible."

Measles symptoms appear 7 to 14 days after contact with the virus and typically include high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. Measles rash appears 3 to 5 days after the first symptoms.

Life & Style

In 'Dune: Part Two,' filmmaker Denis Villeneuve realizes a lifetime dream

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP FILM WRITER

NIKO TAVERNISE/WARNER BROS. PICTURES VIA AP
This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows director Denis Villeneuve, right, with actor Timothee Chalamet on the set of "Dune: Part Two."

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Denis Villeneuve doesn't feel like he came back to Arrakis for "Dune: Part Two." In his mind, he never left.

The sequel, which opens in theaters on March 1, is the culmination of a six-year filmmaking journey, preceded by 40 years of dreaming about it. And it's one that Christopher Nolan has already compared to "The Empire Strikes Back."

Realizing Frank Herbert's novel for the big screen is a feat that has bested and befuddled some of the greats, including David Lean, Alejandro Jodorowsky and David Lynch, the only one who actually got to make a film. But his 1984 film was such a flop that its two sequels were quickly abandoned.

Villeneuve finally got his chance at one of the more turbulent times in Hollywood history, facing two delayed releases (one because of the pandemic, the other because of the Hollywood strikes), an historic shift to streaming and zero guarantee that he would get a "Part Two" at all.

"The conditions could not have been worse to release (Part One)," Villeneuve said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "And still the movie did a decent box office."

Even in that limbo time, he never stopped working on the script for "Part Two" knowing that if they got the greenlight, he wanted to be ready to go. By the time his cinematographer Greig Fraser was picking up the best cinematography Oscar for "Dune," they were deep into pre-production for the second. And everyone was soon back in Budapest with cameras rolling by July. But though they'd conquered the desert in "Part One," new challenges awaited.

"We all walked at the beginning into this project feeling confident," Villeneuve said. "And that confidence quickly eroded."

"Dune: Part Two" would be much more technically challenging, with at least seven major action sequences compared to two in the first. It picks up with Timothée Chalamet's Paul Atreides in the aftermath of the calculated and devastating attack by a rival house on his family and followers who had just established control of the mineral rich desert planet Arrakis. With his father dead, Paul and his mother Jessica (Rebecca Ferguson) retreat to the desert where they establish a tenuous alliance with Arrakis natives known as the Fremen (including Zendaya). Paul trains to fight alongside them against the Harkonnen invaders.

Among the challenges: Filming Chalamet "surfing" on a sandworm in a way that is thrilling and transportive and not at all silly – something that Villeneuve had to figure out how to translate from what he'd imagined into words that would make sense to all the craftspeople working to make it happen in the brutally hot sun.

But none of those stresses seemed to transfer to the atmosphere on location in Wadi Rum, Budapest and Abu Dhabi. In fact, Chalamet said, it was the opposite. Villeneuve appeared to be having fun while making it.

"Denis is so playful. It's like the greatest evidence of self-confidence to me," Chalamet said. "It's ultimately a playful, creative exercise to get to direct any movie. The man who takes himself too seriously, is more focused on the people around him, the audience, than the actual product reeks of a movie that's pretentious."

Josh Brolin, who has now worked with Villeneuve on three films, including "Sicario" and both "Dunes," where he plays Atreides warrior Gurney Halleck, said it takes a unique personality to be a great filmmaker, but that Villeneuve is right up there with the Coen brothers in his ability to do it well.

"Great filmmakers that I've had the gift of being able to work with are misfits. They're true misfits. They're not cool people. They're socially totally inept," Brolin said. "And they found this medium to be able to work through, (where) they can express themselves wildly and specifically. And what's going on in their head that we never were privy to? Now we get to experience it."

Villeneuve has almost gotten used to delayed releases – and both times his films have benefitted from the cushion. The first was held almost a year because of the pandemic, which allowed him to tweak and perfect. This time, he got to do something different: Make a film transfer so that it could be projected on IMAX 70mm and 70mm, even though it was shot on digital.

"It's the ultimate viewing experience and the ultimate format," Villeneuve said.

"Dune: Part Two" cost a reported $122 million to produce and is arriving in theaters not a moment too soon. The marketplace is a little emptier than usual because of the residual effects of the labor standoff in Hollywood last year, and it's also a landscape where superheroes are no longer the trusty "tentpoles" that they once were.

But "Dune" is a different kind of franchise. The first "Dune" made just over $400 million even though it was also released day-and-date on Max (then HBOMax). And Villeneuve is more hopeful this time around. Audience appetite for theatrical is stronger than it was in late 2021, after all. He also believes "Part Two" is both more broadly entertaining and can be enjoyed without having seen the first.

"Part One was more meditative," he said. "We were following a boy discovering a culture. Now we are with the boy avenging his father, falling in love. And it's more of an action movie."

He knows that "Part Two" "has a soul" as well, but he's not quite ready to step back and enjoy it as the 13-year-old boy who started him on this path in the first place. It's one of those paradoxes of adapting something you love, that in order to do so, you have to sacrifice some or all of that, and it will no longer mean what it once did to you.

Before they started on the first, composer Hans Zimmer, also a lifetime fan of "Dune," asked him a question to this effect.

Man may have skipped coursework on decency

DEAR ABBY: Our wonderful daughter has her doctorate. She's a hardworking professor, a job she loves. Her husband, "Phil," has three master's degrees and also his doctorate. In their 20 years of marriage, he has not worked a single job. He would say he is a writer, but if I am generous, he has earned perhaps $250 during their marriage.

Phil is rude, disrespectful, stunningly immature, a bully, toxic and passive-aggressive. He drinks too much and goes to the gym three hours a day. I worked as a psychiatric social worker. My wife of 42 years, who has never said one negative thing about anybody, refers to our son-in-law as "the Grump." Their 10-year-old son is a joy and a blessing to be with. Unlike his father, he has a work ethic and is kind and grateful.

I fully understand we don't control anybody else and often cannot even influence their choices. Over the years, we have spent many nights in tears over what Phil has done or said to us. We have been very generous to them during their marriage. We wish we could keep our daughter and grandson and give Phil a one-way ticket. Our daughter seems reasonably happy in the marriage, but we suspect she's afraid to say anything for fear of being bullied. Any thoughts?

SEEING CLEARLY IN MAINE

DEAR SEEING: Your daughter has stayed married to this "winner" for a reason. If she is fearful of what will happen if she speaks up about her feelings, it seems to me her husband may have more to lose than she will if he gets out of line. You are entitled to share your feelings about him, but in the final analysis, the choice is up to her about how she wants to live her life.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I recently celebrated my sixth anniversary of sobriety. I keep having the same issue pop up time and time again, and I'm not sure how to deal with it.

If I'm invited to dinner with a friend or a group, when the bill comes, someone usually suggests splitting it evenly between the number of people there. My issue is that my water and my salad come out to an average of $30, including the tip. Meanwhile, other members of the group order several alcoholic beverages, which in Los Angeles aren't cheap.

The first time it happened, I'd had dinner with a friend and left the restaurant asking myself why my tab was $80 when it's normally $40. What's a polite way of expressing that I would like to pay only my portion of the bill? I don't want to seem cheap, but fair is fair.

SOBER AND SMART IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR SOBER AND SMART: I agree that fair is fair. That's why, the next time you go to a restaurant with friends, you should ask your server IN ADVANCE for a separate check. If your companions ask why, explain the obvious -- that you are a teetotaler and prefer not to pay for alcoholic beverages you haven't consumed.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

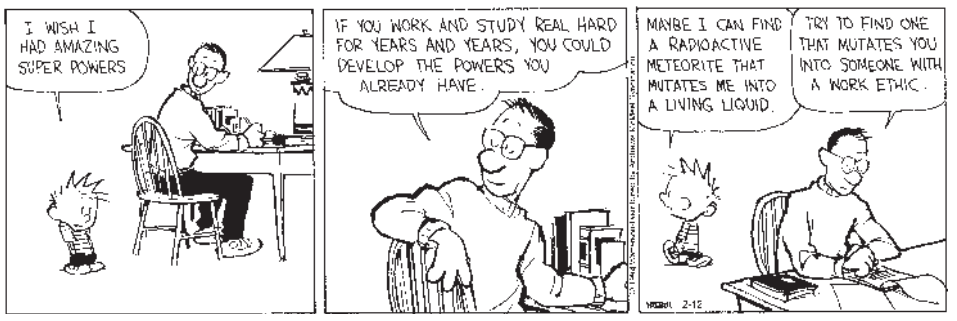
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I WISH I HAD AMAZING SUPER POWERS
IF YOU WORK AND STUDY REAL HARD FOR YEARS AND YEARS, YOU COULD DEVELOP THE POWERS YOU ALREADY HAVE.
MAYBE I CAN FIND A RADIOACTIVE METEORITE THAT MUTATES ME INTO A LIVING LIQUID.
TRY TO FIND ONE THAT MUTATES YOU INTO SOMEONE WITH A WORK ETHIC.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

LOOK AT YOU... SITTING THERE BEING LAZY!
RIGHT THIS MINUTE, HUSKIES IN ALASKA ARE HAULING AROUND WEIGHT. THINK OF THAT!
ALL YOU'RE DOING IS DRINKING BEER.
YES, AND LOOK AT THIS BELLY I HAUL AROUND. I'M LIKE A SLED DOG IN BOXERS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

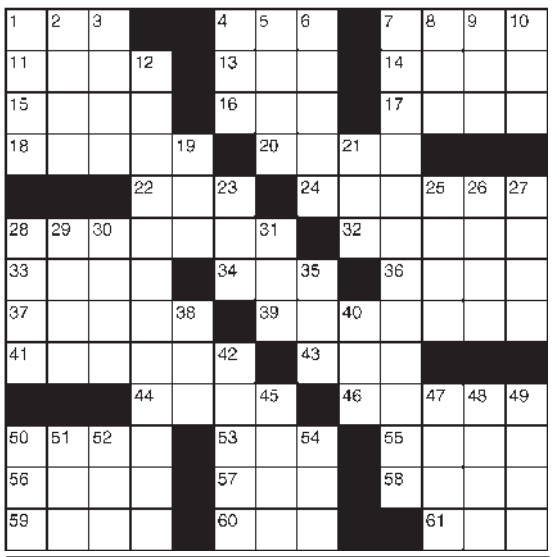
ACROSS
1 Newt
4 Toss in
7 Fireplace fuel
11 Radiate
13 MSNBC's Melber
14 Like a calligrapher's fingers, at times
15 Asian desert
16 Solo of "Star Wars"
17 Proboscis
18 Starts the bidding
20 Exhausted
22 Can metal
24 Burr or Hamilton
28 Orbs
32 Bellyache
33 Tresses
34 Burrowed
36 Beholds
37 Bumbling
39 Fancy feast
41 When roosters crow
43 Baseball's Gehrig
44 Hideaway
46 Deck that includes "The Sun"
50 Iwo —
53 Chow down
55 Wise advisor
56 Grand tale
57 Tax pro
58 Employ
59 Made baskets
60 UFO crew
61 Actor Cariou

DOWN
1 Waffle brand
2 Broadway failure
3 "It Had — You"
4 "Feels great!"
5 Colorless
6 Ate in style
7 Sugar pumpkin, for one
8 Yoko of music
9 Approves
10 Decorate Easter eggs
12 Tsar's residence
19 — Lancelot
21 Summer mo.
23 Homer's neighbor
25 Stead
26 Fencing sword
27 Take it easy
28 Actor LaBeouf
29 Gasp for air
30 Wasted no time
31 Lengthy lunch?
35 Lass
38 Delta's onetime rival
40 "Kidding!"
42 Family reunion attendee
45 Engrossed
47 Bar
48 Shrek, for one
49 Adolescent
50 Purim observer
51 Wall St. debut
52 Roman 1004
54 Prof's aides

Solution time: 21 mins.

A	T	B	A	Y		T	A	Π		C	A	B
A	M	U	S	E		A	G	E		L	O	A
S	I	F	T	S		B	U	F	F	E	R	S
		F	I	N	A	L	E		L	A	T	E
D	I	E		O	H	E		L	U	N	A	H
A	G	I	S		E	I	H	E	R			
M	A	S	H	U	P		A	I	R	B	E	D
			A	M	A	T	I		Y	U	M	A
U	S	U	R	P		U	R	L		Γ	I	B
M	A	N	I		D	R	Y	O	Γ	Γ		
B	U	F	F	O	O	N		T	R	A	S	H
E	L	I		D	I	E		I	E	L	L	A
R	S	T		F	A	R		O	D	O	R	S

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Ricci, 44; Darren Aronofsky, 55; Josh Brolin, 56; Arsenio Hall, 68.

Happy Birthday: Embrace your ideas and turn them into something tangible. Refuse to let outside influences talk you into something that isn't necessary. Take hold of your life and make decisions that suit you. It's time to please yourself instead of bending to the whims of others. Be the sensational person you are, shine your light brightly and set a good example. Your numbers are 7, 12, 19, 24, 30, 36, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Reason, common sense and talking to experts will help you make sound decisions. If you rely on instinct, emotions will take over and lead you astray. When in doubt, sit tight and wait until you feel comfortable enough to make a move or commitment. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Physical action will pay off. Balance will be the key to reaching your goal and maintaining your achievements. Knowing what works best for you and sticking to your plans will help you build confidence and gain respect. Put your energy where it counts. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Take control, enforce what's important to you and refuse to let anyone stand in your way. Choose discipline over disappointment, and you'll discover that hard work leads to satisfaction. Letting outside influences take over will result in regret. Put your energy where it counts. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Keep busy; don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. Refuse to let outside influences push you in a direction that doesn't feel right. Trust and believe in yourself, and follow your instincts from start to finish. Invest in yourself. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: If you simplify your life, you'll discover people and pastimes that fit into your plans and put a smile on your face. Finding your happy place is the passage to personal success. Don't wait for someone to decide for you. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Participate in events and activities you can afford. Burdening yourself with debt and trying to impress or keep up with someone will not help you satisfy your needs. Look inward, focus on personal growth and make lifestyle changes that offer peace of mind. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: You'll gravitate toward people and events that make you think and encourage you to pursue what excites you. Let your actions speak for you, and others will aspire to the standards you set. Avoid getting involved in joint financial deals. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Discipline and creativity will help you bring about positive change. Partner with people who understand your needs and can give as much as they take. Balance and integrity will play an important role when choosing a path forward. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Don't underestimate the power of persuasion. Expect someone to push you toward something that benefits them more than you. Set boundaries and protect what's important to you. Don't spend, donate or let anyone take advantage of you. Keep only what's necessary. ✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Take a moment to recap the past and present, and you'll get a clear picture of what to do next. Change will result in opportunities if you don't take on too much initially. Define what you want and make your dreams come true. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: You have more power than you realize. Use your imagination, and you'll develop an innovative plan that will be the envy of those who try to compete with you. Take what life offers and turn it into something that makes you proud. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Use insight to initiate your plans. The art of manipulation mixed with kindness will help you manufacture the perfect balance that pleases everyone. Be a gentle figurehead who sets an example, brings everyone together and leads without prejudice or hatred; you will satisfy your soul. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, playful and intuitive. You are inventive and generous.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			1		2		5	3
		5	6				1	
		7			3		6	9
3						4		
9	5	2	8	6	4	1		7
	1				5		8	
5	8			2	1	9	7	6
4	9				8			
2	7		3					

Difficulty: ★ 2/12

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

4	7	5	2	1	6	3	8	9
9	6	3	4	8	7	1	5	2
8	2	1	3	5	9	4	6	7
1	4	8	9	3	5	2	7	6
2	3	7	8	6	1	5	9	4
6	5	9	7	4	2	8	3	1
7	8	2	5	9	4	6	1	3
3	9	6	1	2	8	7	4	5
5	1	4	6	7	3	9	2	8

Difficulty: ★★★★ 1/9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

THE GREAT AMERICAN PIZZA BAKE Solution: 8 letters

F	E	B	R	U	A	R	Y	G	N	I	K	O	O	C
R	L	Z	D	E	E	P	D	I	S	H	O	T	R	E
I	I	U	E	D	A	M	E	M	O	H	T	U	P	L
E	S	C	F	W	E	E	K	E	N	D	S	I	A	E
N	A	C	F	F	O	P	V	U	P	T	C	E	I	B
D	B	H	U	P	Y	I	F	I	A	E	H	R	D	R
S	A	I	T	I	T	P	N	T	R	F	E	A	E	A
M	R	N	S	A	A	E	I	Ⓛ	E	I	E	H	M	T
O	B	I	E	R	A	R	I	C	Ⓐ	R	S	S	L	E
O	E	R	T	P	E	O	I	N	T	Ⓔ	E	T	A	G
R	C	Y	P	H	E	L	M	E	N	U	Ⓜ	O	I	N
H	U	L	G	V	S	E	V	I	L	O	R	V	C	O
S	E	R	I	S	T	N	A	L	P	G	G	E	O	C
U	A	L	S	H	A	P	E	G	A	S	U	A	S	A
M	O	Z	Z	A	R	E	L	L	A	D	A	E	R	B

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Bacon, Barbecue, Basil, Bread, Celebrate, Cheese, Cooking, Creative, Crust, Deep Dish, Eggplant, February, Fire, Fluffy, Friends, Fun, Homemade, Hot, Margherita, Meal, Menu, Mozzarella, Mushrooms, Olive Oil, Olives, Party, Pictures, Pineapple, Recipe, Sausage, Shape, Share, Slice, Social Media, Stove, Stuffed, Weekend, Zucchini

Last Friday's Answer: Money

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Mavericks' win streak at 4 with victory over Thunder

DALLAS (AP)—Luka Doncic scored 32 points, and the Dallas Mavericks matched their longest winning streak of the season at four games in a 146-111 rout of the Oklahoma City Thunder on Saturday.

Kyrie Irving scored 25 points and Daniel Gafford had 19 points and nine rebounds in his Dallas debut alongside P.J. Washington (14 points) after both were acquired in trades before Thursday's deadline.

Doncic, who sat the fourth quarter, had nine assists and eight rebounds as Dallas improved to 4-0 with Doncic and Irving in the lineup since Irving's return from a sprained thumb.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25 points for the Thunder, who got Gordon Hayward from the Hornets at the deadline but aren't expected to play the 2017 All-Star before next week's All-Star break.

AP

Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic (77) works to get past Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kenrich Williams (34) in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas, Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024.

WARRIORS 113, SUNS 112

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Stephen Curry made a 3-pointer with 0.7 seconds left and Golden State beat Phoenix for its sixth victory in seven games.

With the Warriors down 112-110 and 3.3 seconds to play, Curry caught the inbounds pass from Brandin Podziemski, turned and hit a 33-footer for his ninth 3-pointer of the night. He had 30 points.

Devin Booker led Phoenix with 32 points, and Kevin Durant had 24. The Suns had two chances after Curry's 3-pointer, but Booker was fouled under the basket and the first and Durant couldn't get a shot off on the second.

Jonathan Kuminga added 21 points for Golden State. Draymond Green had 15 points, nine assists and seven rebounds.

CLIPPERS 112, PISTONS 106

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Paul George scored 33 points and Kawhi Leonard added 24 as Los Angeles rallied in the fourth quarter and denied Detroit its first three-game win streak of the season.

George scored 15 points in the fourth, hitting back-to-back 3-pointers that capped an 11-0 run and pushed the Clippers ahead to stay. James Harden finished with 14 points, eight assists and six rebounds.

Jaden Ivey scored 23 points to lead the Pistons, who dropped their 10th in a row to the Clippers. Cade Cunningham had 22 points and 10 assists, and Jalen Duren had 10 points and 18 rebounds. Simone Fontecchio added 20 points and nine rebounds off the bench.

NETS 123, SPURS 103

NEW YORK (AP)—Dennis Schroder had 15 points and 12 assists in his Brooklyn debut and Cam Thomas scored 25 points as the Nets spoiled Victor Wembanyama's return to the arena where he was the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft.

Nic Claxton added 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Nets, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Ben Simmons scored 13 points on 6-for-7 shooting.

Wembanyama scored 21 points, but the 7-foot-3 Frenchman grabbed just four rebounds after managing only one in a loss at Orlando in his last game. Keldon Johnson scored 19 points for the Spurs, who have lost seven straight and fell to 0-3 on a nine-game trip that bridges the All-Star break.

HORNETS 115, GRIZZLIES 106

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Miles Bridges scored 25 points, newcomer Vasilije Micic added 18 points and nine assists and new-look Charlotte snapped a 10-game losing streak.

Brandon Miller added 18 points to help the Hornets win at home for the first time since Jan. 19.

Micic joined Tre Mann (nine points, nine rebounds), Grant Williams (15 points, eight rebounds), Davis Bertans and Seth Curry in the Hornets' rotation for the first time after Charlotte dealt mainstays P.J. Washington to Dallas and Gordon Hayward to Oklahoma City on Thursday.

Jaren Jackson Jr. had 29 points for the Grizzlies, who have lost eight straight and played without seven injured players.

MAGIC 114, BULLS 108, OT

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Franz Wagner scored 36 points, Cole Anthony had 14 points and 11 rebounds off the bench, and Orlando turned back Chicago.

Paolo Banchero had 19 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for Orlando. Jonathan Isaac finished with 12 rebounds, seven points and three blocks.

DeMar DeRozan led Chicago with 28 points. Nikola Vucevic added 26 points and 17 rebounds, and Ayo Dosunmu scored 19 for the Bulls despite playing much of the game with five fouls. Coby White finished with 14 points and seven assists.

76ERS 119, WIZARDS 113

WASHINGTON (AP)—Tyrese Maxey scored 28 points, Buddy Hield added 23 and Philadelphia snapped a four-game losing streak.

Ricky Council IV added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Sixers in their sixth consecutive game without seven-time All-Star Joel Embiid, who underwent left knee surgery on Tuesday. Maxey also had nine rebounds and seven assists.

Tyus Jones scored a season-high 25 points and hit a career-best six 3-pointers for the Wizards, who lost their sixth straight and slipped to 2-7 under interim coach Brian Keefe.

Deni Avdija added 21 points and 13 rebounds and Kyle Kuzma scored 21 points for Washington, which never led after the first quarter,

CAVALIERS 119, RAPTORS 95

TORONTO (AP)—Jarrett Allen had 18 points and 15 rebounds, Evan Mobley added 17 points and 11 rebounds, and Cleveland extended its winning streak to a season-high nine games.

Donovan Mitchell scored 15 points and Max Strus had 14 as the surging Cavs won for the 22nd time in 26 games and improved their NBA-best road record to 17-8.

Caris LeVert and Georges Niang each scored 13 points for Cleveland. Isaac Okoro scored 12 points and Darius Garland had 11.

Toronto's Scottie Barnes scored 20 of his 24 points in the first half, matched his season-high with 10 assists, and added 10 rebounds for his fourth career triple-double and third this season. Gradey Dick and RJ Barrett scored 14 points each and Immanuel Quickley had 10.

PACERS 125, KNICKS 111

NEW YORK (AP)—Myles Turner scored 23 points and Tyrese Haliburton added 22 as Indiana sent New York to its third loss in four games.

Pascal Siakam added 19 points and T.J. McConnell finished with 16 for Indiana, which shot 61% (50 for 82) in the game, including 48.3% (14 for 29) from 3-point distance. Isaiah Jackson finished with 12 points and Aaron Nesmith had 13.

Jalen Brunson returned to the Knicks' lineup after missing Thursday's loss to Dallas due to a sprained right ankle and scored 39 points.

Alec Burks returned to New York as part of a deal with Bojan Bogdanovic from the Detroit Pistons before Thursday's trade deadline. Burks, who was with the Knicks from 2020-22, scored 22 points and Bogdanovic scored all 11 of his points in the first half of his New York debut.

Precious Achiuwa scored 15 points and Donte DiVincenzo 14 for the Knicks.

HAWKS 122, ROCKETS 113

ATLANTA (AP)—Dejounte Murray had 34 points and Atlanta overcame a sluggish start to beat Houston for its sixth win in eight games.

Trae Young had 18 points and eight assists, Saddiq Bey scored 24 and Jalen Johnson added 21 for the Hawks.

Jalen Green had 26 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists for the Rockets, who lost all four games on their road trip.

Jeff Green scored a season-high 19. Aaron Holiday had 18 points against the team he played for last season.

PELICANS 93, TRAIL BLAZERS 84

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Trey Murphy III scored 24 points and New Orleans won for the fifth time in six games.

Brandon Ingram added 17 points, nine assists and five rebounds, and Jonas Valanciunas had 16 points and nine rebounds to help New Orleans rebound from a loss at the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday night. The Pelicans were without Zion Williamson because of a bruised left foot.

Jerami Grant led Portland with 24 points, and Deandre Ayton had 18 points and 17 rebounds. Dalano Banton scored 12 points in his first game with the Trail Blazers after coming over from Boston at the trade deadline.

Morey 'hopeful' that Embiid can return for possible postseason run

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Philadelphia 76ers team president Daryl Morey expressed optimism on Friday that reigning NBA MVP Joel Embiid would return from a knee injury in time for a possible postseason run.

"We're hopeful," Morey said before the 76ers hosted the Atlanta Hawks and three days after Embiid underwent surgery on his left knee. "Feedback has been more good than bad since we first heard about what led to his procedure. So, we're hopeful and we're building the team to make it better this year. Obviously, it's not at 100 percent. But with Joel playing at an MVP level, hopefully, he could get back to that. And this is a year that we have a real shot."

Asked if his approach would have been different depending on Embiid's injury news, Morey was clear.

"If the hope wasn't there in Joel, I think it would have changed things dramatically," Morey said. "We're very hopefully. Obviously for sure, it's not 100 percent. It's something that is probably unfortunately a good chunk short of 100 percent. But we thought it was the right thing.

"There's a lot of ways to not win the title. Winning a title is hard; Joel not coming back at the level we hope is one of the ways we can't win a title this year, most likely. ... But you always want to be among the best teams and that means taking risk on the injury front and that's where we are at right now."

Embiid, averaging 35.3 points and 11.3 rebounds in 39 games, has missed the last five games since Golden State forward Jonathan Kuminga fell on his left leg, injuring the meniscus that required surgery on Tuesday. The initial report from the 76ers said that Embiid would be "re-evaluated" in four weeks. Before that, Embiid had been held out because of left knee swelling in Philadelphia's two previous games.

Morey declined to describe the exact procedure that Embiid had, which would have provided a clue to the significance of the injury.

Morey said he struck out in a bid to fill Embiid's shoes and upgrade the team's backup center position from Paul Reed. He said he was shocked that no 'bigs' were dealt before the trade deadline.

Instead, Morey picked up veteran guards Buddy Hield and Cameron Payne in separate deals. Philadelphia acquired the two as part of four deals that included the departure of Patrick Beverley, Danuel House, Furkan Kourkmas and Jaden Springer, as well as forward Marcus Morris Sr. The 76ers also shipped out four second round picks in those moves while receiving two back in trades with Milwaukee and Boston.

"Our priority was to get a big, but we wanted to add to our playoff rotation this year," Morey said.

Hield will likely be a key 3-point shooting threat for Philadelphia, helping to assist All-Star Tyrese Maxey, who has seen defenses swarm to him after the Embiid injury.

"We have to win games and it's going to be a battle," Morey said. "But we were focused on playoffs, we have a rotation that we know can win at a super high level and that he was the only player who moved teams that would play a big role in our rotation. What he brings to the table is pretty obvious."

Hield and Payne were available against the Hawks on Friday night. Maxey was held out because of an illness.

Chiefs, 49ers have high-profile offenses, but defense should decide Super Bowl winner

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The Chiefs go as far as Patrick Mahomes takes them. The 49ers have Christian McCaffrey, Deebo Samuel, George Kittle and a star-studded group surrounding Brock Purdy.

This Super Bowl will come down to the other side of the ball.

Defense wins the Vince Lombardi Trophy on Sunday.

Kansas City is seeking to become the NFL's first repeat champion in 19 years. San Francisco is aiming for a record-tying sixth Super Bowl title.

Mahomes, Travis Kelce and coach Andy Reid get most of the attention on the Chiefs (14-6), but defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo's unit deserves plenty of credit for carrying the team during various points of the season when the offense was inconsistent and out of sync.

All-Pros Chris Jones and Trent McDuffie along with George Karlaftis, L'Jarius Sneed and others stepped up, giving the Chiefs their best defense of Mahomes' era.

They'll need to do it for one more game against a versatile, dynamic offense.

The 49ers (14-5) also have a formidable defense led by Nick Bosa, All-Pro Fred Warner, Javon Hargrave and Charvarius Ward. They've struggled in the postseason, especially making third-down stops.

They have to be better against Mahomes and the Chiefs to have a shot to win.

AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) stretches during practice for Super Bowl 58 Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024 in Henderson, Nev. The Chiefs will play the NFL football game against the San Francisco 49ers Sunday in Las Vegas.

AP

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Brock Purdy (13) warms up during a practice ahead of the Super Bowl 58 NFL football game Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, in Las Vegas.

WHEN THE 49ERS HAVE THE BALL

The 49ers had the league's third-ranked rushing attack behind McCaffrey and fourth-ranked passing offense behind Purdy. The Chiefs gave up the second-fewest points (17.3), were fourth against the pass and 18th against the run.

McCaffrey, tight end Kittle, left tackle Trent Williams and fullback Kyle Juszczyk were All-Pros. Brandon Aiyuk was a second-team All-Pro. Samuel is a versatile, do-everything player.

The 49ers have plenty of weapons, and coach Kyle Shanahan is known for finding innovative ways to use them and keep defenses off balance. He's facing a master tactician in Spagnuolo.

It'll be a chess match.

Spagnuolo has a penchant for blitzing. Purdy excelled against it.

The 49ers have to block Jones, who can be a game-wrecker. McDuffie is a shutdown slot cornerback and Sneed allowed only one receiver all season to have more than 50 yards receiving in a game so Purdy has a tough task.

He led the NFL with a 113.0 passer rating on 4,280 yards, 31 TDs, 11 picks and a 69.4% completion rate. McCaffrey led the NFL with 1,459 yards rushing and had 14 rushing TDs for San Francisco. He also had 564 yards receiving for seven scores.

Kittle had 65 catches for 1,020 yards and six TDs. Aiyuk led the way with 75 receptions for 1,342 yards and seven scores. Samuel had 1,117 yards from scrimmage.

A wild card for San Francisco's offense is Purdy's surprising mobility. His scrambling was a major factor as he led comeback wins against the Lions and Packers in the playoffs.

The Chiefs shut down two-time MVP Lamar Jackson, the best running QB in the NFL, so they'll be ready for Purdy.

WHEN THE CHIEFS HAVE THE BALL

The Chiefs had the league's sixth-ranked passing offense behind Mahomes and 19th-ranked rushing attack. The 49ers were 14th against the pass and third against the run, but they have allowed 13 of 25 third-down conversions in the playoffs.

Mahomes is a brilliant playmaker who finds unique ways to make big plays when it seems nothing is available. The two-time NFL and Super Bowl MVP threw for 4,183 yards with 27 touchdowns, a career-high 14 interceptions and career-low 92.6 passer rating. His receivers dropped 44 passes, the most in the league.

The Chiefs' offense runs through Mahomes and Kelce. Without a deep threat— Tyreek Hill was traded to Miami two years ago — Reid has turned the passing offense into a shorter, carve-up attack.

Rashee Rice has the ability to turn screens into big plays and veteran Marquez Valdes-Scantling has averaged 21.6 yards per catch in the playoffs.

Kelce had 93 catches for 984 yards and five TDs in the regular season and he has taken his game to another level in the playoffs, with 23 catches for 262 yards and three scores in three games. Rice had 79 receptions for 938 yards and seven TDs in the regular season.

The Chiefs have to use running back Isiah Pacheco to balance the offense. He ran for 935 yards and seven TDs in the regular season, and he has 254 yards and three scores in the playoffs.

Reid is one of the NFL's most creative coaches, and he's willing to add new wrinkles in the biggest games. Kansas City again won't have All-Pro left guard Joe Thuney and the offensive line has a big challenge protecting Mahomes from Bosa, Hargrave and the rest of San Francisco's pass rush.

Warner and Dre Greenlaw can control of the middle of the field and limit some of Kelce's opportunities, forcing the Chiefs to attack outside.

Mahomes can always make plays with his legs. He scrambled for 26 first downs in the regular season. Playing on an injured ankle in last year's Super Bowl, he had a big scramble on Kansas City's go-ahead drive in a comeback win over Philadelphia.

If the 49ers bring the heat and turn up the pressure like Tampa Bay did against Mahomes in the Super Bowl three years ago, that could be trouble for the Chiefs.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Niners rookie kicker Jake Moody was 21 of 25 on field goals in the regular season, but he's looked shaky in the playoffs, with two misses in five tries. His longest field goal was 57 yards.

Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker made 33 of 35 field goals in the regular season, including all five from beyond 50 yards. He hasn't missed in the playoffs, making seven field goals and seven extra points. Butker's 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds left gave the Chiefs a 38-35 win over Philadelphia in last season's Super Bowl.

San Francisco punter Mitch Wishnowsky had a 42.7-yard net average. Kansas City's Tommy Townsend had a 41.9-yard net average.

The Chiefs use Mecole Hardman and Richie James for returns. Hardman had the longest punt return at 50 yards and James had the longest kick return at 31.

The 49ers will sometimes use Samuel on kick returns, with Ray-Ray McCloud getting most of the returns on punts and kicks.

COACHING

Shanahan is 8-3 in the playoffs and 0-2 in Super Bowls, including one as an assistant. His 49ers blew a lead against the Chiefs in this game four years ago and he was offensive coordinator for Atlanta when the Falcons blew a 28-3 lead against Tom Brady and the Patriots in Super Bowl 51.

Reid is a likely future Hall of Famer. He already has two Super Bowl rings and is the winningest coach in the history of the Chiefs and Eagles.

INTANGIBLES

The 49ers initially were 2 1/2 favorites, but the line dropped to 1 1/2 on Saturday, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. They've been favored in every game this season. The Chiefs have embraced the underdog role in the playoffs, going on the road to beat Buffalo and Baltimore.

Reid and Mahomes are chasing Bill Belichick and Brady. They've got to win four more Super Bowls to match them.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Saipan's Super Bowl LVIII picks

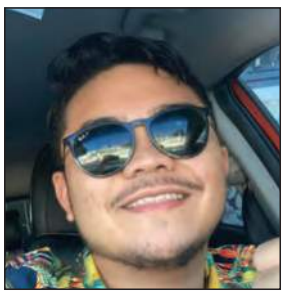
Will it be two Super Bowl titles in a row for the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LVIII today? Will pop superstar Taylor Swift give the Chiefs luck with her presence? Or will the San Francisco 49ers take down the Chiefs' bid for a repeat?

Whether you're a "Swiftie" tuning in just for her or are an avid football fan, buckle up for a wild ride. Take a look at local gridiron fans' picks below.

■■■

Camacho

Chan


Fajardo

Guerrero

Lee

Maratita

Ruszala

Villacrusis

"Rooting for the Kansas City Chiefs. I know the Niners have a lot of weapons on both sides of the ball with Purdy, Deebo, CMC, Bosa to name a few, but Mahomes is a playmaker and he can create opportunities even when there aren't. It's gonna boil down to the play calls between Andy Reid and Kyle Shanahan and which team can adjust better. Mahomes & Reid vs, Purdy & Shanahan? I'll take Mahomes * Reid. Go Chiefs!"

—George N. Camacho, RCORP Program manager, CHCC CGC

"I'm a Giants fan through and through. So, I just want an exciting game. Hard to hate on either team. Can't deny [Patrick] Mahomes being in the GOAT [greatest of all time] conversation soon and everybody loves an underdog story like Purdy's. But would love to see Taylor Swift rush the field if the Chiefs win.

–Norman Chan, chef/owner of The Angry Penne

"I've been a Niner fan since the Joe Montana days when my family would go to Candlestick Park in Hunter's Point. I'm a fan because they are a classy organization that helps the community and always demonstrates good sportsmanship. Two things that we all should be doing on the daily! 28-21. Niners for the Dub."

–Dave Guerrero, CEDA Economic Development manager

"I'm rooting for the Kansas City Chiefs this year. I was rooting for them last Super Bowl and the Chiefs did not disappoint. It was a close game with the Eagles but overall, I don't doubt the Chiefs will make an impression this year again. I actually made some money because of the Chiefs! So, this year we definitely have to stick with them."

–Vincent Fajardo, Sales associate, Red Eye

"49ers, reason being they got a young team with drive behind them and with the help of their three quarterbacks Brandon Allen, Brock Purdy, and Sam Arnold. They have a lot to prove coming out of San Francisco and being 2020 their last appearance coming so close to winning last time against the Chiefs, they probably won't make the same mistakes as last time."

–Benjamin Maratita, Public Relations specialist, Saipan Mayor's Office

"This year I'm rooting for a good game. Since my Bills aren't in the Super Bowl (for the 30th year in a row), I just want the Chiefs and the 49ers to have a great competitive game. That said, I kind of hope the Chiefs win because my buddy Broc Calvo is a massive Taylor Swift fan and the founder of the Saipan Swifties. He just started watching football this year when his girl Tay-Tay started dating Travis Kelce."

–Brad Ruszala, Triple J Saipan Corporate Marketing manager

"I'm not a fan of both teams but I'm rooting for the Niners. The Niners have a good championship history and they've shown this season that they have a complete team to win it all. Plus, Sonny Sablan of Inas Kitchen is a good friend of mine and he's a big Niners fan."

–Joe Villacrusis, owner of Salty Skin Pacific

"Neither, I don't like them both. I'm a Raiders fan! If there's a possibility of both teams losing, then that's what I am rooting for."

–James Lee, NMIBF president

TEAM

From page 20

ning through Tanapag.

Along with the competitive team race, there were also noncompetitive teams and solo runners R.J. Aquino and Raymund Tolentino who joined in.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said that the turnout was good enough for him. They had 45 participants and said that they filled in their 10-team slot.

The new half marathon course from Hyatt to Marpi and back will be the course for the next few years, said Dela Cruz.

Since this year's format was that everyone makes their own teams instead of being drafted into one, Dela Cruz said those who want to break the record have to wait for 2026 as next year's Ekiden will be a draft format.

LEIGH GASES

Run Saipan Marianas Ekiden '24 participants pose for a group photo under the new start/finish line arch at the Hyatt Regency Saipan parking lot last Saturday after the race.

Dela Cruz then thanked Run Saipan/Northern Marianas Athletics officials, and Marianas High School National Honor Society volunteers, Hyatt Regency, Cha Cafe, *Saipan Tribune*, and *Marianas Variety.*

ANTONI

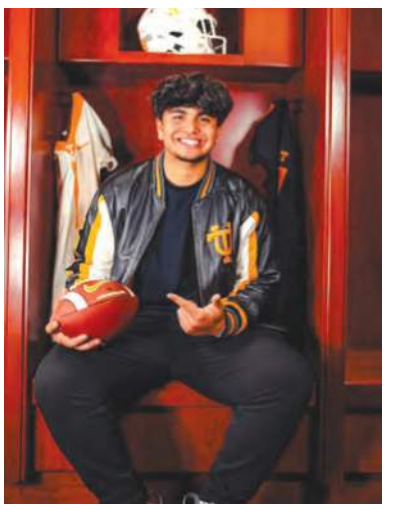
From page 20

has recently partnered with Founders Designs as their first High School NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) Athlete. They partnered up last month with Antoni promoting their business/brand, and are currently selling his merchandise brand "Head Down, Grind On," which is a saying between Antoni and his father.

Ambrose said that "Head Down, Grind On" was inspired "by [Antoni's] grit and attitude towards his goals that no matter what adversity or hype comes your way, keep your head down and focused on your goals, stay grounded and grind it out no matter what to reach your highest potential."

Antoni, for his part, said he is adjusting "easily" in his new school. "The people are nice and very welcoming." As for how he feels being ranked highly in the nation, he said, "Just grateful to be in the position I'm in. To see me being ranked nationally for the position I play just means I have a privilege, which means bigger things are going to be expected of me. Still got a lot to learn but I got an amazing group of people that I surround myself with who will make that job much easier."

With senior year and his last hoorah in his high school career coming up, he said, "Going into my senior year I'm really just looking forward to staying healthy and having an amazing season with my teammates. The goal is to make it to state and win the state championship but for now we are just working on our craft during this off season."


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Junior Day" is where colleges invite high school juniors going into their senior year to learn more about what their program has to offer and to meet the rest of the coaching staff.

NMI

From page 20

ilinan and Ezekiel Macario.

In the Pacific Under 17 Invitation Team Challenge 2024, the NMI players will be battling the representatives of Fiji, New Caledonia, Cook Islands, Tahiti, and Guam. The competition is mixed team with the opposing squads playing in the boys and girls singles and doubles and mixed doubles. The NMI will have its first game against Guam on Feb. 16 at 1pm (2pm Saipan time) and the former will have back-to-back matches as it will also take on Fiji on the same day in the 5pm pairing. On Feb. 17, the NMI will duel Tahiti in the 9am morning match and then squares off against Cook Islands in the afternoon game at 1pm. New Caledonia will be the NMI's last assignment as they collide in the 9am tiff on Feb. 18.

The NMI representatives are scheduled to arrive in Australia this Monday afternoon and will have a brief training camp at Badminton Geelong before starting their campaign in the NMI Junior National Badminton Team.

Asked about the team's chances in the competition, Pangilinan said the squad is heading to the tournament more prepared and ready to put on their best performance. The team went through two training camps on Saipan under Robbie Thackham, the coaching and development manager for Badminton Oceania. Pangilinan, Macario and Northern Marianas Badminton Association vice president Nate Guerrero also trained the team four times a week to prepare the young players for the tough battle in Australia.

"The goal is to make it to the podium this time and use the experience that the two players (Malonzo and Tsukagoshi) gained from last year's the Pacific Under 15 Invitation Team Challenge to provide leadership to the team. The players have been doing well in our training sessions and we also received good feedback from Mr. Thackham during the two training camps he conducted," Pangilinan said.

When Malonzo and Tsukagoshi joined last year's Pacific Invitation Challenge, the team was just one notched away from gaining a medal in the competition after finishing fourth and beating Guam and Tonga.

Meanwhile, NMBA president Merlie Tolentino thanked Badminton Oceania for extending again the invitation to the NMI to participate in the Pacific Invitation Challenge. She also acknowledged the support of the players' parents and the school officials for allowing the students to be excused from their class to have the opportunity to compete off-island.

"It takes a lot of effort and support from all the stakeholders in our program—from the parents to the principals, to be able to provide this great opportunity to our players. This is our second participation in the Pacific Invitation Challenge and each time our players come back from a competition, they learn a lot and these help and inspire them to become better players," Tolentino said.

"We wish our team the best of luck. Our coaches have worked hard to get them ready for this competition and with the team's commitment to the program, we, at the NMBA, are confident they will be able to put on a strong performance in Australia." ***(PR)***

Mavericks' win streak at 4 with victory over Thunder.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Saipan's Super Bowl LVIII picks.

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Team API fastest in Run Saipan Ekiden '24

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team API wiped out the competition in the Run Saipan Marianas Ekiden '24 last Saturday and ran first into the new and colorful Run Saipan start/finish line arch.

In teams of four, each runner completed one of the four stages of 5K, 5K, 5K, and 6K in order, totaling the distance of a half marathon.

High school student-athletes Michael Miller, Takeru Jim, Pony Tang, and Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez tore up the new half marathon course that started from the Hyatt Regency Saipan to Marpi and back with a new course record for the Ekiden Relay format at 1:23:00.

Team API stands for Asia-Pacific Invitational—after the high school cross country competition that the team joined in Guam last year.

Jim ran the first 5K leg and clocked in at 19:41 with a 6:20 pace per mile; Tang ran the second leg with a 19:47 time and a 6:22 pace; Chavez ran the last 5K leg with a time of 22:20/7:11 pace; and Miller wrapped it up with a 20:30/5:29 time on the final 6K.

Second place went to Team No Speed Limits with a time of 1:28:00. Sildrey Veloria ran the first 5K at 19:21/6:31; Dr. Lily Muldoon finished at 21:48/7:01; barefoot runner Chong Nam Lee clocked in at 24:49/7:46; and Jody O' Sullivan topped it off with 22:22/5:59.

Third place was team Go! 50's with a time of 1:43:00. Akiko Miller had a time of 21:39/6:58; Yuriko Custodio was at 34:03/10:57; Noriko Jim finished at 23:08/7:26; and Kosuke Sato clocked in at 24:10/6:28.

Tang said in an interview that the race was "pretty good. It was pretty cold—no sun, it was a fun course, and the wind wasn't that strong too."

As for the early 5am race start, Tang said, "It's better than running at 6am. It's colder and dark, so you have more adrenaline." He added that an extra motivation to run faster was being chased by dogs twice as he was run-

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LEIGH GASES

Team API runs into first place in the Run Saipan Marianas Ekiden '24 last Saturday from the course that ran from Hyatt Regency Saipan to Marpi and back.

NMI Jr. National Badminton Team off to Australia

The NMI Junior National Badminton Team left for Australia Sunday morning to compete in the Pacific Under 17 Invitation Team Challenge 2024 that will be held at Badminton Geelong in Victoria from Feb. 16 to 18.

The national junior squad is made up of Marianas High School students Genelyn Lansangan, Marlon Bautista, and Sernantie Jimenez, Saipan Southern High School's Shaina Malonzo, Saipan International School's Lina Tsukagoshi, and Tanapag Middle School's Evan Seguritan. All six are part of the NMI Junior National Team Pool that have been training regularly since last year and have been participating in the interscholastic badminton program for years. Joining the squad in Australia are coaches Janelle Pang-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The NMI Junior National Badminton Team players and coaches pose for a photo at the departure area of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport Sunday morning before heading to Australia to compete in the Pacific Under 17 Invitation Team Challenge.

Antoni Ogomuro ranks high nationally on rivals.com

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

CNMI son Antoni Kade Ogumoro is continuing to tear up the gridiron, even after a change of high schools, and is ranked high amongst other athletes in the website, rivals.com.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Antoni Kade Ogumoro seen in a photoshoot during the University of Tennessee's "Junior Day."

Rivals.com is a network of websites that focus mainly on college football and basketball recruiting in the United States, with Antoni rated a 3-star athlete; the No. 1 Offensive Tackle in the State; the No. 10th ranked player regardless of position in the State of Oklahoma; and the 48th Offensive Tackle in the Nation.

Antoni and family moved to Oklahoma from North Carolina last November because of his dad, Ambrose's U.S. Marine duties. The 6'5" and 290-lb left tackle and defensive lineman is currently finishing up his junior year in Elgin High School, Oklahoma.

Since their move, the rising football star has steadily gained interest and college offers from more schools around the nation.

He currently has 13 offers from Old Dominion University, North Carolina State University, East Carolina University, University of North Carolina, Duke University, Coastal Carolina University, University of Cincinnati, University of Tennessee, Virginia Tech University, Tulsa University, Iowa State University, University of Houston, and Oklahoma State University.

Along with keeping up with football and studies, and adjusting well to his new environment, Antoni

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